THE INFLUENCE of JESUS CHRIST ON THE PEOPLE

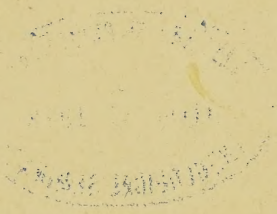
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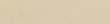
THE GOD-MAN THE MODEL OF LIFE

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM UNSWORTH

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1897

PREFACE.



This third and last volume on the influence of Jesus Christ brings me to the close of a work I have long had on my mind, but a busy life has prevented me carrying out my purpose earlier. In some points it may be no worse but better on that account. I am only concerned about following out my convictions sincerely and truly, and not about the credit or discredit the work may bring me—though I am properly anxious to be useful especially to poor thinking young men. Probably I think more about the few than the many; in the best sense the few are the many, as Gideon's three hundred men were as many or even more than the three thousand. The views I have expressed in these three volumes are true from my own standpoint; so are a hundred other views. The influence of Jesus Christ on men and work and life is inexhaustible. It requires an eternity to study the subject fully.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Temptations of the People.

Jesus Christ accepted all the conditions of human life. At the commencement of His public ministry He encountered Satan in severe and prolonged conflict. Up to this point in His personal history He had been like a plant in the conservatory, but now came the bedding-out for the fuller growth and exercise of the graces of His religious life. He must be exposed to the fierce winds and storms like all other men; must live a real human life and not be a gigantic pretence. His temptation in the wilderness was not a vision, or a dream, or a myth; it was a bitter personal experience.

The story of the temptation of Jesus Christ may seem singular in all its strange elements. We may be greatly perplexed with the facts, but conclude that He was really

tempted, though He was the Son of God—however astounding it may appear that He should have this terrible personal struggle with the Evil One. The preparation for the campaign is first made, and afterwards comes the severe fighting. So the temptation of Jesus Christ preceded His public ministry. It was in the ordinary course of arrangements. The bud passes into the flower, and indeed fulfils itself in the rose; and the triumph of Jesus Christ in the temptation in the wilderness was the prophecy of His final victory over Satan, which will be fulfilled in due course.

Was not this secluded struggle with Satan of the nature of a personal probationary test of character—as in the case of so many ministers, missionaries, church-workers, and men engaged in patriotic and philanthropic enterprise, in whom there must be special fitness for difficult spiritual and social work? Certainly Jesus Christ did not go alone into the wilderness to investigate and meditate, as scientists and philosophers sometimes go into solitude to perfect their studies. He went alone to struggle with the powers of darkness.

Like Jesus Christ, we all find that the Christian life has its terrible temptation, its forty days in the wilderness solitude, its hand-to-hand fight with Satan. All true Christians at one time or other have been in the wilderness of dark doubt, the wilderness of the agony of prayer for divine light and guidance in some crisis of their history, the wilderness of strange wonder why God had forsaken and forgotten them when they most needed Him.

Humanly speaking, we should have thought the first act

of Jesus Christ, after He had been so signally owned and blest of the Father at His baptism, would have been to proclaim the kingdom of God to the multitude. It certainly did seem a splendid opportunity for making a profound impression on the public mind. But there is a wide difference between God's ideas and our own. The first act in the ministry of Jesus Christ was a severe combat with Satan. He must be tested before He begins to preach.

When Jesus Christ came into public life He had joy and sorrow, flower and thorn, sunshine and shade. There was the Father's approving voice, and the deep gloom of the wilderness. He was prepared for His ministerial work by painful discipline. It is frequently so with His ministers and people. The Holy Spirit who enlightens and blesses us leads us into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. We are often prepared by painful trial for some position further on in life which we do not see while the severe temptation lasts. God keeps us in the gloom and loneliness of the wilderness to prove us, to see whether or not He can trust us in some higher and more important service. The trial to us is worth much in developing our character. It makes men of us, and there are no true men without it.

Now, if Jesus Christ was tempted, we must expect to be tempted. But it is no sin to be tempted, and it is certainly no proof that we are not in the favour of God. The child under correction is still loved by the parent; and the Christian in painful discipline is still under the great Father's smile. The sun is always shining behind the dark cloud and on the dullest day; and when the day is cold and

gloomy, we may rest assured that we shall see a clear, bright sky again, with its blue and crimson and gold. And so the spiritual atmosphere will clear and the Sun of Righteousness shine upon us. When we are happy, we easily believe that God is with us; but, when strongly tempted, we begin to think that God has forsaken and forgotten us. Yet it is not so. In our deepest sorrows and darkest moments God is nearest to us.

In severe and protracted temptations we may be greatly depressed; but, as Christians, we must not think of living by mere feeling. If you have been knocked down in the street by a public conveyance, and are badly bruised and sadly shaken, it is not the time for your friends to ask you how you feel—you are thankful to have escaped with your life. Those who have been in a terrible railway collision, and hardly yet realise how seriously they have suffered, are not simply to be asked how they feel—they are thankful that they were not killed outright. And those again who have escaped shipwreck may be sore and sick and faint; it is evidently no time to inquire into the precise state of their feelings—it is enough for them to know that they are quite safe on land. There are times when we hardly know how we feel; we are tempted and tried very sorely, or have to do unpleasant duty, but down in the depths of our consciousness we just know that we are saved by the grace of God, and that is enough for the time being: joy may come when the trial is over. In a blinding snowstorm we must be content if we find our way safely.

Jesus Christ had extraordinary preparation for extra-

ordinary conflict. The copious baptism of the Spirit was received before He was tempted of the devil. It is often so with Christian ministers and Christian workers who have difficult duty or hard conflict before them. They may have one without the other, but God proportions the strength to the struggle. "He stayeth His rough wind in the day of His east wind." The best preparation for severe temptation is to be filled with the Spirit. If left to ourselves we are weak as other men, but if filled with the Spirit we triumph over the Evil One.

As to the temptations God may appoint or permit, let us not fear them but go forth to meet them in the strength of His grace. A minister or church-worker is hardly fit for any important duty in the Church of Jesus Christ, and can scarcely lay claim to an established character, till he has passed through the gloom and loneliness of the wilderness, and been tested by the singular temptations of the devil.

This first temptation of Jesus Christ was *addressed to the senses*, an assault on His lower nature, and singularly adapted to His circumstances. He had endured a fast of forty days and forty nights, and was suffering from physical exhaustion. To say the least, it was a singular coincidence that Moses, Elijah, and Jesus Christ fasted forty days and forty nights. In each case it was very extraordinary, if not purely miraculous. It is certainly surprising how mental excitement, in some instances, takes away the desire for food, and for an almost incredible time people have fasted. But human nature could not sustain a fast of forty days and forty nights, unless in very rare cases of marvellous strength.

Fasting is allowable, but not a religious duty; is nowhere expressly enjoined in Scripture, but is thought by some to be understood and implied. Catholics and High Anglicans so far pervert fasting as to insist on early Holy Communion without food, which is a most unworthy materialistic view of the Sacrament of the Last Supper. Dean Farrar says that, "fasting was a work of supererogation, not commanded or sanctioned by the Law and the Prophets; and it was alien alike to the habits and principles of Him who came not by external asceticism, but by absolute self-surrender, to ennoble by divine smiles the common life of man." It is very possible for the most sincere and devoted to push fasting to an extreme; but, if properly observed, fasting may greatly help us to control the bodily appetites, although we are not to regard it as a mere penance or self-mortification, but as an act to remind us that the kingdom of God does not consist in "eating and drinking," in material things, but in great motives and principles, "in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Jesus Christ was strongly tempted to doubt His own eternal Sonship. Satan was careful not absolutely to deny it, but insinuated that He might possibly be deceived in the voice from the heavens which declared Him to be Divine. The subtle suggestion is, that Jesus Christ was the willing dupe of His own imagination in the hour of exultant joy; that He too readily fancied Himself the special favourite of Heaven in a brief moment when the sky was remarkably clear and bright. And is not this the master-stroke of policy with Satan when tempting the disciples of Christ?

He comes to the child of God when clouds and mists gather thickly round the mind, when God's dispensations are the darkest, and not when all is bright and joyous. It is precisely then that Satan softly whispers that the voice of the Spirit, which assured us of our pardon and adoption, was merely a disordered imagination. The dark, subtle suggestion plagues us—"If Thou be the Son of God"—and we perhaps say, Have we been mistaken after all? But light and joy come again.

The temptation was adapted to Christ's present circumstances. He had no bread, and was alone in the wilderness where bread could not be obtained. Was it at all likely that a loving Father would leave a beloved Son in such a trying condition — leave Him to pinching hunger in a barren wilderness? It was not hunger with the certain prospect of a good meal. That kind of hunger does not mean much. His was keen hunger with no prospect of food. The whole force of this temptation lies against physical nature, and chiefly bodily appetite. But, generally speaking, men hunger for so many things. What will they not do to satisfy the hunger of their nature, as in gluttony, drunkenness, fornication, and all kinds of fleshly lusts? Jesus Christ met all the forces of evil assaulting the body and succeeded in defeating them at every point, and so kept sin excluded from every emotion of soul and body. And for all of us, honest struggles, manly fighting against sin at every entrance, is the only way to conquer Satan. Such a policy of life is sure to bring us complete victory in the end. All else will fail and disgrace us utterly. But, in point of circumstances, the rich man with

a handsome balance at the bankers has an advantage over the poor man suffering from bodily hunger. And does not Satan tell many a poor, hard-working man that if he really were a member of God's family he would not be left to suffer in deep poverty, left almost to perish of hunger, and his children left in want of bread? The stress and strain upon the poor man's faith is difficult to endure.

Jesus Christ was tempted to doubt His Father's providence. Satan intimated that the Father had left Him alone in the wilderness without bread, plainly indicating that He was to provide food for Himself. "Command that these stones be made bread," a thing easily done "if Thou be the Son of God." Satan is a subtle foe. The unconverted he tries to persuade to disregard God's threatenings, telling them God is too benevolent to punish; but in Christian minds he tries to create distrust of God's fatherly goodness. He suggests that if we be God's spiritual offspring He will surely provide what is necessary; and He will, but perhaps not in the form laid down in our minds. He has to teach us our dependence on Him, and so sometimes shows us that our means are exhausted without any apparent fresh supplies. But these tests of our character are more valuable than large fortunes, and cannot part between us and God; nor does the fact of our necessities being met in a marvellous manner prove us independent of God. Because the fruit exists and becomes mellow after it is plucked, it is not therefore independent of the tree; it derives its nature and substance from the tree. And we are not independent of God when we obtain blessings by

unlikely means; His hand is in it all, even when we receive the most unexpected good.

Jesus Christ was tempted to supply His personal wants by His personal power; to take His case out of the hands of His Father and manage matters for Himself, without further trusting to His Father's care and love. At another time there might have been nothing wrong in making stones into bread, but now He must leave a perfect example of submission to the will of the Father. So in the present posture of affairs He wrought no miracle to gratify Satan or to mitigate His personal suffering.

In His reply to this temptation Jesus Christ does not think it necessary to satisfy the inquiries of Satan. He does not affirm or deny His eternal Sonship. The base insinuation of Satan is unnoticed, yet the Divinity of Jesus Christ is seen in His not disclaiming the title Son of God. Nor are we under obligation to answer all the questions which Satan may propose to harass and perplex us. He is intellectually subtle, and if we stay to argue with him we shall find him more than a match for us. Jesus Christ has here taught us how to deal with our wily foe—not answering his inquiries or adopting his evil suggestions. Now, had Jesus Christ made stones into bread, Satan might have charged Him with want of faith in His Father's providential care; and, on the other hand, had He refused to work the miracle Satan might have charged Him with inability to convert stones into bread. So, acting in this way, Jesus Christ escaped the double difficulty—and we shall do well to imitate His example. But ever let us remember when

we have bread we do not live by that alone; and when we have no bread one word from the mouth of God can provide bread for us. As the children of God there is a general and a particular providence watching over us. Many good Christian people have had their distressing circumstances met in a way of which they had no idea previously. They were brought into extreme necessity, and their necessities were supplied by what appeared to be the merest accident; but the slenderest incidental circumstances are parts of the machinery of Divine providence. These contingent circumstances show us that God can give bread by extraordinary means as easily as by the ordinary processes of nature or the law of supply and demand—"effective demand and available supply."

No doubt *the question of bread is a very important one; but it does not cover the whole case of man.* State socialism simply concerns itself with the question of bread, with the improvement of man's material circumstances, and leaves out of account man's spiritual nature. Christian socialism covers the whole nature of man. He does not live by bread alone. Kings, queens, princes, dukes, lords, and millionaires have plenty of bread, but die like other people. We are not merely guided by the necessities of our lower nature. We have minds which think and feel and yearn for more than material bread. There is something greater and grander than material interests. The truest life of man does not consist in the abundance of the things which he hath. He is something wonderfully different from his material environments; he is a spiritual and immortal being.

Here Jesus Christ has set us *a splendid example of dealing with material things.* The temptation to Him was to prostitute His Divine power, to employ it for purely secular purposes, rather than to use it for spiritual ends; it was a temptation to convert that power into selfishness, making it a power acting for the flesh and for time, instead of a power acting for the soul and eternity. Bread is the symbol of physical life. Was Jesus Christ simply to become carnal? And are Christians to act as if there was nothing greater than materialism—food, and raiment, and the like things of earth? Is Christianity simply to teach men inventions, to multiply harvests, to cover the world with industrialism and wealth—to become, in fact, a mere system of political economy? Are we to live only to turn stones into bread? Was Jesus Christ Himself to do nothing grander for the race? Was he simply to make rocky soil everywhere fruitful? That is to say, was He to be a temporal prince—to sit on the throne of David after the flesh? It is precisely here that we get into the very essence of the temptation of Satan. Was Christianity to be a mere material force in society or a spiritual and universal power among the nations? Jesus Christ had to face the question not just for Himself but for all men. Man shall not live by bread alone, and all that bread represents.

The material is already strong in man; he needs grace rather than bread to develop his true manhood. And Christianity, rightly understood, means not self-indulgence but self-control. Even Christ came to His power over self by severe discipline. He had loneliness, hunger, weariness,

inward struggle against selfishness, against pride of heart and intellect, against the pomp and vanities of this present evil world, and all this brought Him into deep sympathy with His tempted and tried people. He showed us the pathway from animalism to Christian manliness. We must reach spiritual greatness by suffering and struggling as Christ did. The God-man in the wilderness in sore need of bread would not employ the weapons of secular life to conquer spiritual temptations. He overcame by submission, patient endurance, humility, spiritual energy, unselfish love, lofty faith, and fidelity to the Father. And these are still the proper weapons of our Christian warfare, and the supreme force in history. Let us not part with our character for bread, sell our souls for material food, barter our birthright for a mess of pottage. And if Satan presses the temptation sorely when we are in great need,—either presses it mentally or by his agents,—let us use the words of Holy Scripture to repel the tempter. Bread may be good and necessary, but we need something more to keep the whole man alive—we need God Himself.

This is *an age greatly concerned about questions of bread, an age steeped in materialism.* The mere money-making spirit is predominant in many circles. Commercial gentlemen look upon material things as all-important, and ask, in a purely business spirit, Will the undertaking pay? Man is regarded simply as a money-making machine. National progress is gloried in when it is only material progress. Men boast that they are getting on when it is only their circumstances that are getting on. But nations and com-

munities will sooner or later find that man does not live by bread alone—not by the mere improvement of material circumstances. The man himself must be improved or else the improvement of his circumstances will do little for him. This is the blunder of modern state socialism which is ignoring Christianity. Even legislation can only remove hindrances, and experience teaches us that character is the most potent factor in social progress. Our forefathers hoped too much from free trade, household suffrage, a national system of education, and the spread of secular knowledge; all good in themselves, but bread-questions as formerly advocated, lacking strong moral impulse. The spiritual side of man's nature must not be lost sight of or the mistake will be fatal.

John Bright says: "No Government, no administration, no laws, no amount of industry or commerce, no extent of freedom, can give prosperity and solid comfort to the homes of the people unless there be in the homes economy, temperance, and the practice of virtue." Do not suppose for one moment that Jesus Christ undervalues questions of bread properly guarded. He taught us to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." But, rightly understood, this is bread for the soul and intellect as well as bread for the body. He multiplied bread by miracle rather than let the people starve. The people wanted to take Him by force and make Him a bread-king, but He withdrew into a mountain. Socialists want to make Him a bread-king in this age. He is concerned that the people shall have bread for the body, but infinitely more concerned that they shall have bread for the mind and

heart. He did not encourage men to yield to the temptation of idleness, but taught and encouraged prudent forethought, industry, and economy. In effect Jesus Christ is still saying to tradespeople, statesmen, philanthropists, political economists, Do not think and act as if bread were everything for man, for it is not; you must give him spiritual bread or you fail to satisfy the deepest hunger of his nature.

Sometimes *churches to-day tempt poor men to become Christians by the offer of bread in many forms.* They engage to find situations for sons and daughters, to help the education of the family, to use influence in many ways to increase the income of the household. No wonder the temptation is too strong for numerous weak natures, and they fall victims to corruption and bribery in subtle forms or by coals and blankets. The temptation comes also to the idle, the immoral, to turn Christian that they may live upon the charity of the churches. These are known in India as rice Christians, and in England as charity Christians. Another Luther is required to throw an inkstand at the devil, who is doing terrible work in the immoral and glaring public temptations of the age; but another Luther is also required to throw an inkstand at the churches for publicly demoralising the age by temptations for the sake of increasing party power. The positive evils created by church rivalry are fearful to contemplate in the England of to-day; and we ought to judge men and systems by their positive and not by their negative qualities. When the churches compete in unholy rivalry for the population by the offer of

mere material bread, they forget their spiritual mission and assist Satan in his work of temptation.

As to the next temptation, it is probable that Jesus Christ walked from the wilderness to Jerusalem in the ordinary way, not shrinking from this further conflict with Satan, who, though repulsed in the first onset, returned to the charge again, like a warrior who wishes to retrieve his reputation after the loss of a great battle. With this temptation the battlefield changes. This conflict is not in the desert wild, but in the city full, in Jerusalem itself, the Holy City, on a pinnacle of the temple. This is not a private but a public battle. Here in Jerusalem men were expecting the promised Messiah. John's ministry had recently stirred all hearts to their lowest depths. Now a grand opportunity presented itself of making an astounding impression on the public mind. If Jesus would cast Himself unhurt from the top of the temple to the pavement below, the people would at once believe in Him. Satan therefore said: "Cast Thyself down." Do it before the public; let them see what a grand man is among them; intimating at the same time that there was no danger of inflicting serious injury on Himself by so acting since it is written: "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest haply Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

In this instance Jesus Christ was tempted to make an open and unwarranted display of His power—if He really were the Son of God. The loneliness of the wilderness was not the fitting place for such an ostentatious exhibition, but

Jerusalem was. In the wilderness there were none to see Him, but here in Jerusalem the expectant multitude were eagerly looking on. We see in this temptation how Satan adapts his subtle suggestions to the dispositions, localities, and circumstances of men. Some Christians like to be seen and known; Satan tempts them in the crowded city before their fellow-men. Other Christians are in danger of committing sins in secret; Satan tempts them in the solitude of the wilderness. And some Christians are of a sanguine temperament; Satan tempts them to rush into extreme danger without any definite call of duty. When Satan found that our Lord's faith in His Father's loving care was not to be shaken, he tempted Him to carry His confidence to the most extravagant presumption. Christians, like their Master, are nowhere secure against the temptations of Satan, not even in God's house, in the very temple—like nettles springing up among sweet-scented violets.

As the former temptation was addressed to the lower nature of Jesus Christ this is addressed to His higher nature—to His soul and mind, to His spiritual confidence. There is nothing vulgar, sensuous, or selfish in this second temptation. And some Christians have run into extreme spiritual perils who have escaped all sensual danger. It is therefore necessary for Christians to be on their guard as to special dangers of a refined or spiritual and intellectual nature. This particular temptation touches personal fame, the praise of talent, genius, scholarship, the worship of popularity, the admiration of intellectual greatness, the hero-worship of the age—all is glanced at in this temptation—for this is a

distinct appeal to the love of praise in Christ Himself, the love of the admiration of the multitude; and a temptation of this kind is very dangerous to ambitious Christian men. So Jesus Christ faced the peril and showed us how to conquer it.

The temptation comes to many in this age to enter some sphere which is beyond their talent, scholarship, artistic fitness, scientific capability, or theological qualifications. Some Christian men are tempted to become dreamers, visionaries, wild enthusiasts; to waste means, opportunities, abilities in curious and unprofitable speculations. Others are tempted out of their providential path, where God meant them to walk and work, into paths where they have no calling and little or no usefulness. Some are in the ministry who ought to be in business, and some in business who ought to be in the Christian ministry. Satan tries to render good men useless by leading them away from something they can do to attempt something they cannot do. One goes to music who has no ear for it, another to painting who has little taste or imagination, and yet another to engineering who has no mechanical genius, and a fourth to Parliament who ought to remain in the office or behind the counter. The strong temptation comes to seek respectability, popularity, and to gratify unlawful ambition. The poet, the painter, the sculptor is tempted to exhibit his genius and not the genius of Jesus Christ; tempted to make his position and win fame, and not to keep to his pure and lofty ideal. All are tempted to do unlawful things and to use unlawful means to accomplish the end they have in view.

Was Jesus Christ in this instance tempted to cover His heart from the scorn and contempt of His inferiors, who were to be His masters and judges; to act like a proud, imperious person, infinitely above them; tempted not to be open and frank and above-board? He was to be a poor, homeless wanderer among men. His outward inferiority was markedly great, while His inward superiority was greater still. Was He to be an outward ostentatious prince, a man of this world, and not rather an inward king of the heart? He was, in point of fact, truly humble, meek, and lowly in heart; gave up fame, wealth, luxury, and all the great things of earth. "Did these temptations," says Dr. Dale, "involve our Lord in real conflict with inducements and provocations to sin? Were the temptations as real as His hunger and thirst and weariness and pain? For myself I cannot doubt it. He was 'in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.' He had to determine before His public ministry began whether, in fulfilling it, He would submit to the extremity of self-sacrifice; whether He would suppress all self-assertion, and live and work in a spirit of absolute submission and subordination to the Father; whether in establishing His kingdom He would, at whatever cost, refuse to make any compromise—even any temporary compromise with the powers of evil. . . . He refused to listen to the tempter, just as a strong man who has been truthful for years refuses, without an effort, to listen to the temptation to lie." These real temptations Jesus Christ met and conquered, and would not take a single step in a doubtful path or in an evil direction. And, like Jesus Christ, we

have to make up our minds what our course in life shall be—whether we shall live for God or Satan, for truth or a lie, for right or wrong, for purity or impurity, for love or hatred. These things must be fully settled in our own minds and not be open questions when we meet Satan—we must be completely armed for the battle.

We are not to understand the reply of Jesus Christ to the second temptation as if it were a mere rebuke sternly administered to Satan. In that case it would have had little weight with him, for he never scruples to pervert Scripture. If meant as a rebuke to Satan, it would look like an indirect admission of Christ's weakness, and a call for quarter from the enemy. He simply means that He Himself was not to tempt the Lord, as if He needed some further experiment to prove that He was the Son of God; or to tempt God by presuming upon His protection from evil consequences when doing imprudent things which imply a personal exposure to destruction. And the proper use of Christian liberty is not to tempt God, not to make experiments upon God, or, as Dr. Parker puts it, "to set traps for God."

Christian people in this age sometimes tempt their ministers to risk their lives. In effect they say: "Cast thyself down." The elevation may be lofty and the fall deep, but they say there is no danger, since God will take care of His ministers; or, if they do happen to die, He will take them at once to heaven. These well-meaning but weak people want their ministers to do a thousand rash things; and with them ministerial work really becomes a

fetish. It would be so extremely nice if the minister would only wait upon such and such important members of the congregation for subscriptions. If the minister would form such and such a class it would be so very useful. It would be so effective if the minister would commence a new cause in such and such a locality. The minister, "dear, precious man," has so much influence that if he would only undertake this, that, and the other it would be sure to flourish. And so the minister, already overburdened, is to take the church on his back and carry it. This is an evil policy for the church, and an evil policy for the minister to adopt. It is like farmers and gamekeepers killing the birds under the belief that they are shooting the thieves, when they are really killing the policemen. Nature best preserves its own balance. The birds kill the insects and only take fair wages for honest work. It is prudent to keep to the proper laws of Christian work, or our day of toil, commencing with a brilliant morning, may abruptly close in gloom, and we may never half accomplish the task God Himself has set us.

As to the last temptation of our Lord, though we do not know the particular mountain on which it occurred, it was probably one of those which are said to be round about Jerusalem. Arrived at the summit of the mountain, Satan showed Him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. As if he had said: Here are the empires of earth; they are all in my undisputed possession. I am the God of this world, and I will yield them up to Thee without a struggle if Thou wilt acknowledge my greatness, fall down

and worship me. Satan had already been defeated in his appeal to Christ's natural hunger and intellectual pride; and now his effort is to dazzle Christ with material magnificence, with the splendour of earthly power, with the glory of human governments. This was a temptation to make Jesus Christ an earthly prince; to make Him greater than the greatest generals, greater than the greatest kings, greater than the priest and temple. Is not this, in fact, another form of appealing to the ambition of Jesus Christ? And the strength of the temptation is felt by men who are highly gifted. Is it not difficult to use great talents, and great opportunities, and great power for the glory of God and the good of the whole race?

Though Satan in this last temptation exhibited the splendour of earthly kingdoms, he was careful to conceal the bondage and the degradation; and though he spoke as if he had the power to bestow the kingdoms, as if his by right of possession, he had no such power. Satan is a deceiver and the father of deception. He says if men will only fall down and worship him, all shall be theirs: wealth, power, pleasure, greatness, dominion, and all that earth can yield. Here precisely is the unspeakable blunder—men and devils contemplate the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, never dreaming that the kingdoms are laid waste by sin, and that the glory has departed. Certainly there are some lingering traces of ancient grandeur; but we can only speak of greatness in ruins, or in process of restoration by grace.

Now it was to put Jesus Christ on *a worldly throne in*

opposition to the mediatorial throne on which the Father purposed placing Him that in this third instance Satan tempted Him. But this temptation implies a direct and flagrant dishonour done to God, and Jesus Christ replies with holy indignation: "Get thee hence, Satan." All worship and service are due to God, and we cannot transfer our homage and obedience to Satan without neglecting the worship of God. "Gold is more valuable than silver, yet a very little gold may be advantageously exchanged for a large quantity of silver." But we cannot act on this principle in spiritual devotion, and exchange the gold of God's worship for the silver of Satan, as no particle of true devotion can be profitably exchanged for the base coin of Satan's service. The message of Jesus Christ to this age of materialism is this: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Thou shalt not worship intellect, public opinion, position, respectability, success, popularity, or indeed anything beneath the skies. Thou shalt make a god of God only—not of self, not of others, not of property, not of mammon, not of genius, not of scholarship, not of art, not of literature, not of caste, not of luxuries, not of fame, not of pleasure. Thy affections, intelligence, energies, faculties, must all be consecrated to the Most High, and not prostituted to Satan's evil enterprise.

Jesus Christ has taught us *how to secure spiritual victory over the temptations of Satan.* It was by manly resistance, by inward strength, and not by outward protection from evil. His own moral vigour enabled Him to triumph.

"Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." Satan was allowed to exhaust all his resources; he followed up one temptation after another, each of which was thoughtfully conceived and cleverly executed. But he utterly failed, and left Jesus Christ victorious. It is in the same way that we are to triumph. The protection against temptation must be from within rather than from without. Our spiritual vigour must resist the evil suggestions of Satan as a strong constitution resists disease. Our instinct of danger must lead us to flee from temptation as insects, birds, and animals flee from danger.

When Satan left Jesus Christ in the wilderness it was not a final abandonment. He kept up the struggle through His public ministry—for men were possessed of devils. On the Cross temptation was flung at Him by His enemies mocking Him. "If Thou art the Son of God come down from the Cross." This would go like a sword through His soul. "Was it a temptation to Him, one wonders," says Dr. Stalker, "when so often from every side the invitation was given to Him to come down from the Cross? This was substantially the same temptation as was addressed to Him at the opening of His career, when Satan urged Him to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. How easily He could have come down from the Cross!—yet no; He could not. They were quite right when they said: 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save.' Had He saved Himself He would not have been the Saviour." And we cannot save others if we will save ourselves.

This same temptation comes to the Church to-day to lean on the State and not to trust to spiritual force for the regeneration of the community. It comes also to scientists and philosophers who adore material progress as if it were the true progress of society. This is the great blunder of some politicians and political economists, who conclude the world is advancing when material blessings are rapidly multiplied. The struggle between Jesus Christ and Satan is still going on in ten thousand forms in the temptations of the present age.

Jesus Christ as man met and conquered temptation. Had He simply coped with Satan as God, He would have been no example for us; but now He becomes the model for our diligent imitation in fierce and protracted temptations. Inspiring ideals are needful amid the temptations of the Christian life, and the God-man is the most unique and inspiring ideal in history. Lecky says: "For eighteen centuries the religious instinct of Christendom has recognised its ideal in the man of sorrow." He had our dangers, struggles, trials, sorrows, difficulties, and temptations—had all that we have to contend with and endure. He was in state and nature made like unto His brethren, and so is capable of sympathising with us in our temptations; knows how to encourage us in the thick of the fight, and says: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He overcame Satan and his formidable host. That victory is our triumph. As He overcame, we shall overcome too, in the same way and by the same means. He knows how to deliver us out of all our temptations; knows the method,

the time, the instruments to employ. We are perfectly safe if we only take care to watch, pray, obey, and trust in Him amid the storms of temptation sweeping over our souls, while those who are not alert in soul and intellect may be left like a tree torn up by the roots, or broken by the strong winds of the mountains.

Temptation is one of the chief characteristics of the age. If goodness is more active to-day evil is also more active. No doubt "temptations are the raw material of our glory," but the raw material of our danger too. Temptation comes to us to put power to improper use, to secure promotion by partially concealing the truth, to indulge in the fleshly appetites. Men are tempted by idleness and overwork, by covetousness and extravagance, by gluttony and fasting, by gross amusements and refined pleasures, by worldly conformity and by the abandonment of the world for secluded life. We have the pattern answers to all our temptations in the great temptations of Jesus Christ. The perplexed conditions of human living are all represented in His temptations. The answers of Jesus Christ are to be our answers to all the temptations of life. Obedience to the Father makes our path in life clear in a way nothing else can; obeying the voice of God we know what to do—a gleam of sunshine comes on the flowing river, and we see which way the stream runs. Jesus Christ urged His tempted followers to keep alert and prayerful: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Watch thought, motive, desire, emotion, society, and Satan; but pray for power to meet and resist temptation from every quarter, especially the

temptation to yield to discouragement and forsake your post of duty.

The temptation comes to us to make much of ourselves and little of Jesus Christ. Now to set up ourselves as small gods is the worst of all idolatry. To exalt ourselves and belittle Jesus Christ—in religion, art, science, literature, commerce, politics, government, in all life—is the deepest and blackest sin. Yet the temptation comes to us to take God's place and God's credit in a thousand forms, and not sincerely and humbly to keep to our proper mission in life. This temptation came to John the Baptist, but John honestly said: "I am not the Christ." Jesus Christ wants to make men of noble character, not men clothed in soft raiment and faring sumptuously every day; not weak, indulgent men, like a reed shaken with the wind, but standing in the love and practice of the right, like a rock with the wind and waves beating against it. The temptation comes to preachers to preach themselves and not Christ Jesus the Lord; to preach popular views in which the people are interested and not spiritual Christianity. The temptation comes to statesmen to seek influence and power by flattering the masses or the classes, and to maintain a discreet silence about the vices of the people or the vices of the wealthy. The temptation comes to multitudes to go away from their proper work, imagining they may gain fame, power, wealth, position, and perhaps do more good in some other sphere; but they make nothing out and return to work they can do when it is too late to be successful. At bottom pride was their ruin.

The temptations of the age are probably *more attractive* than in former times—perhaps not so coarse and vulgar, but more refined and pleasing, though there is plenty of low vice in private places. The temptations to fleshly indulgences are great and manifold. We have the temptations of impure literature, of multiplied public-houses and gin-palaces, of theatres and music halls, of houses of ill fame, of unsavoury police reports and reports of divorce courts extensively circulated in our daily newspapers. We have also the temptations of horse-racing, foot-racing, boat-racing, of the cricket ground, the football field, and of the betting mania. We have, further, the temptations to reckless speculations, ambitious undertakings out of all proportion to legitimate prospects, and public displays altogether unwarranted by circumstances. The temptations to earthly glory and earthly pleasure, to become suddenly rich or great or famous, all leading to the enormous multiplication of places and forms of temptation both for heart and intellect, flesh and spirit, require the utmost care and watchfulness in these days. "I will set my camel free and trust him to Allah," said one. Mohammed said: "Tie thy camel first and then commit him to God." We must take similar steps with the temptations of the age. It is not safe or right to leave the public unprotected against the vicious practices of men. We must first act wisely and then trust God to keep the people pure.

Probably we have all asked ourselves which is *the most reasonable way of dealing with the glaring temptations of life?* Are public temptations to be altogether removed, or

are people to struggle with temptations till by grace they triumph over them? The plan of Jesus Christ was not to remove all temptation, but to instruct and strengthen His followers that they might overcome it. He allowed temptation in many ways—temptation to dishonesty, fornication, slavery, bloodshed, and a thousand other things. He condemns and forbids these and all evils, and ultimately punishes them if committed and not repented of; but He only removes them by moral means and not by an effort of omnipotence. Man has the power to sin; the means, the opportunity, the circumstances in which he can transgress the law of God. Jesus Christ reasons with man, commands man to do right, but He still leaves man the power and means of doing wrong. What does it mean? What but this, that it is noblest and best to overcome evil not by its complete removal, but by giving man power to conquer it? Is not this the meaning of the fall of man, of redemption, and of probationary temptation? And is not character grander, moral virtue more precious to God, and are not all Christian excellences higher and nobler when obtained by severe and protracted struggles? Christianity was never meant to be a mere hothouse plant. Religious character was never intended to be given to man ready made. It was to be fairly and honestly won by conflict, that the Christian might have moral hardihood and not goodness of a mechanical sort—a machine-made piety. Hence Jesus Christ is a great influence, not a set of rules in temptation. "Virtue, not innocence, was Christ's aim; enlargement, not diminution of the life principle; victory over temptation, not escape

from it, His method." He meant to make sturdy, strong, full-grown men.

Are we, therefore, not to *stop temptation by national law*? This is an important question which Christian workers must fairly face. At least in many ways we may do so, for God does so by His law; and society has always done so in certain matters when men were agreed that the things condemned endangered the peace and well-being of the community. History, observation, and experience establish this practice. There is a sense in which it is perfectly true that we cannot make people virtuous by Act of Parliament. And the danger is, while national legislation suppresses outward immorality the evil may be driven deeper into the heart of society. No doubt the best method of suppressing temptation is to conquer evil by the power of individual grace, prudence, and strength. This comes to the generally admitted principle that self-government is the highest and most beneficial form of government. Yet, as William Wilberforce says: "*We should at least so far remove the obtrusiveness of temptation that it may not provoke the appetite which might otherwise remain dormant and inactive.*" We must, however, strengthen and fortify the mind against sin; put men on their feet and help them to stand. But sometimes we must let them stand alone, as a mother does the child when teaching it to walk, and as a father does the son when he puts him into business for himself. Temptation is sure to come as the probationary test of character. It is impossible to shield ourselves, our families, or our friends and neighbours from temptation; but it is possible

for all to meet temptation with spiritual courage and God's grace, and so to pass through temptation unhurt, as in the case of Jesus Christ. There are Christian men who in this age pass through the furnace of fierce temptation without the smell of the fire hanging about their garments. I have known the timid robin sing bravely in the fog of early January, and a few days later seen the snowdrop blooming amid frost and snow. So in mist and mystery, in the hardest and most painful temptation, we may lift our head in triumph and give praise to Jesus Christ. The thing is to strengthen the individual man that he may overcome all temptation.

To young men and young women the temptations of the age are very great. They are tempted in the situations of life by evil example and evil conversation; tempted by sinful amusements, by what looks innocent externally, but internally turns out to be of Satan; tempted by the hot passions of youth, which need to be controlled; tempted by the companions of youth, who lead them on by almost imperceptible degrees till virtue is lost and open sin practised. Temptations come into the sweetest and purest young life, like thorns and thistles springing up among the sweetest and most beautiful flowers. Many warm-hearted and inexperienced young people are peculiarly exposed to terrible danger from temptations. The old tree may be blown down in the storm, but the beautiful young tree may also perish in some exposed situation. The old tried Christians may suffer loss from the temptations of the times, but the young Christians are more liable to fall

into temptation and lose their character. Only Jesus Christ can keep us in the dark day of temptation, and He will do so if we let Him. Evil is universally pervasive in society, and Jesus Christ takes care of His young disciples by inward strength rather than by external protection.

CHAPTER II.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Laws and Discipline of the People.

Christianity treats men impartially; enforces its claims, and makes known the consequences of refusing to meet them without respect of persons. Environment, nationality, culture, or the want of culture, lofty social status, or low social status, or any of the mere accidents of birth and fortune do not change Christian laws. Proper allowance is always made for inferiority of privilege. But in all else the king and the beggar, the high-born and low-born, the learned and illiterate are equals before God. One common standard of religious life is erected for all men; and all classes of the community and all nationalities must stand on the same platform. The world, in its pride, exalts its aristocrats and casts its peasants into the shade. But Christianity soars infinitely above all social and intellectual distinctions, and, looking down with impartial grace and authority on the whole human race, says that all men must accept the teaching and training of Jesus Christ. In England and in Europe there is an aristocracy of wealth.

Thomas Carlyle contended for an aristocracy of intellect. Jesus Christ established an aristocracy of goodness—and this is the truest and noblest aristocracy in history, an aristocracy of character and not of circumstances.

From the teaching of Jesus Christ we learn the wisdom of counting the cost before we become His disciples. The man who examines Christianity before embracing it is more likely to be true to Him in the midst of tribulation. In this way he will become acquainted with the sacrifices which Christianity calls upon him to make, and the opposition it requires him to encounter. And so, having carefully made up his mind on these points, he will probably become a Christian from principle and not from momentary excitement. But the man who, without proper forethought, becomes a Christian, acting under the impulse of the moment, is more likely to turn from Christ when the excitement is gone and the struggles of Christianity begin. He has not a heart fixed to serve Christ at every risk; and so "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, he is offended," and turned out of the heavenly way. Generally speaking, what is easily acquired is lightly held; what is hastily taken up is speedily laid down; what is espoused in the first blush of enthusiasm is abandoned in the first difficulty. When men are brought into the service of Jesus Christ by a great wave of strong feeling they are in danger of cooling down and returning to their old lives. Matthew Henry says, in his quaint and forcible style: "What is easily got is easily lost. Where there is not a principle, though there should be a profession, there will

not be perseverance. A ship without ballast may, at first, outsail the laden vessel, but will certainly fail in stress of weather." In Christianity Jesus Christ does not want ships without ballast; He wants force, personality, character.

The method of Jesus Christ in making disciples shows that *the principle of self-sacrifice* lies deep down at the very foundation of Christianity. John Sterling says truly: "The worst education which teaches self-denial is better than the best which teaches everything else and not that." Some people are aiming strenuously to secure ease and comfort for themselves and their offspring. But Jesus Christ says, work and deny yourselves for others. His whole treatment of His disciples is to fit them for service. We should not simply look at His dealings with us in the outward and immediate aspect of life either in prosperity or adversity, while we do not altogether overlook the present; for His dispensations have a deeper and more extended meaning. He is preparing us for work farther on in life which we do not see for the time being, and gives material wealth, intellectual wealth, spiritual wealth, that His servants may serve society; or He closes one door of usefulness that He may open another.

Jesus Christ sees through and through men. He knows all the sides of character, understands His work, what He wants men for, and how to select and train His workers. One scribe came to Him and said: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." It was mere lip-service, and never grew to anything true and real. He acted under the influence of momentary excitement, and was not guided

by an enlightened understanding. Probably the miracles and temporary popularity of Jesus Christ stirred his tender sensibilities as a man of great emotionalism. But he depended too much on himself, and was heedless of future difficulties; was too much attracted by the passing fame of the Prophet of Nazareth, and not enough influenced by proper principles. It is as if he had said, Master, many are following Thee now, but some of them will probably soon forsake Thee, yet I never will. Now Jesus Christ offered this scribe no earthly inducement whatever to follow Him, no sort or degree of corruption and bribery to become a Christian. He simply said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." This is all I have to offer My disciples; the only material interest I possess. There are no roses without thorns in My religion. You see what you may expect if you follow Me.

On the same occasion He said to another: "Follow Me." The man replied: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." But in effect Jesus Christ said: I am infinitely more precious than the best of earthly fathers, however good and precious they may be. "Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead;" and Luke adds: "But go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." It is as if Jesus Christ had said that is in itself infinitely more important than burying dead men, though they may be the nearest and dearest relations in the world—and there is certainly a fitness, an acknowledged propriety in paying the last tribute of respect and affection to them. But this

man seems to have been extremely dilatory, and wanted to see his father fairly in the grave before putting himself to any inconvenience. His father may have requested him to stay at home till he died, may have been getting old and infirm, may have been a truly kind father, and so the son would much rather not break up the home as long as the old man lived; but when he was dead and gone, when the way was fairly clear, when the last obstacle was removed, and after mature reflection, he would without failure follow Jesus Christ. But He claimed the immediate and complete surrender of all, as He does to-day in the case of many a Jew who embraces Christianity, many a Hindu, many a Chinese, and many a missionary to the heathen. All interests and all relations must give place to the spiritual work and service of Jesus Christ, just as all the private affairs of the citizen must give way to the commands of the Queen when she calls for his services for the good of the State.

Another said: "I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my home." No, said Jesus Christ, home-life is very sacred and precious in my estimation, but I am more valuable and precious still: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." There must be no longing for the great and good things of earth in the place of Christianity. Some would immensely prefer to be Christ's disciples were there not so many sorrows and self-denials inseparably associated with it. But are those who are un-Christian always full of joy and free from trial? Have they

no sorrows, losses, afflictions, persecutions, disagreeable neighbours, and are there no traitors among their friends? It will be found upon careful examination that they do not always live in an earthly paradise, but have, in point of fact, more troubles and fewer pleasures than Christians.

It is thus seen that Jesus Christ works principally in the region of the soul. And in this age, as Christians, we too commonly carry about with us in daily life heavy burdens of all sorts instead of the burden of souls. We carry the heavy burden of the problem of higher criticism, the problem of evolution, the problem of environment, when we ought rather to bear the burden of souls. It is in the region of the soul that all true improvement commences. Character makes circumstances and circumstances do not make character. Hence Jesus Christ began with the soul, and set other things right by setting the soul right first, and through life He works first on the soul.

Jesus Christ did not call or provide for *self-indulgent men*, for men who, above all things, want the luxuries and enjoyments of life. He frankly informed His disciples that they must be prepared to forsake all and to follow Him; that they must submit to rough treatment, as He Himself had done from the commencement of His public ministry. There was the greatest honesty in disclosing the painful future to His followers. An impostor would have given fair promises and painted the future in brilliant colours. But Jesus Christ revealed the dark as well as the bright side of the Christian life. Yet there are Christians in this age who want the indulgences and respectabilities of life, Christians

who long to be accounted honourable in the estimation of the gay and worldly around them. In fact, Christianity to them is a new luxury, simply an additional indulgence. This is the special danger of our high civilisation. But, in the name of all which is sacred, what have Christians to do with carnal pleasures and respectabilities? Are they not here on earth for a brief space to live like Jesus Christ? And what else can they seek after and yet remain His disciples? Jesus Christ lived a wandering life of self-denial. His early disciples were like him, and Christians to-day must really deny themselves and follow Him. We do not want artificial Christian life; we want sincerity, honesty, reality, Christlikeness in act and deed.

Discipline in the Christian life is of incalculable advantage to us. It is always fatherly discipline. We meet it with terror and hope, dread the trial, yet know the glorious hope to which it will give birth, the peaceable fruits of righteousness the discipline will yield to our chastened soul. In ordinary life there is a perpetual struggle for existence, and this severe but gracious law does not cease to operate in the higher life of man. Mr. Kidd says: "The law of life has always been the same—ceaseless and inevitable struggle and competition, ceaseless and inevitable selection and rejection, ceaseless and inevitable progress." This is the fixed fundamental law of development in nature and grace. And as in nature the law of degeneracy begins to operate the moment struggle ceases, so it is in spiritual religion. Burke saw this law at work before our modern scientists, and says: "Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who

knows us better than we know ourselves, and He loves us better too. . . . He who wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper." But while life is always one of painful discipline it is also one of grace. And so Christianity becomes the instrument of training for self-denying service—blossoming into wonderful and eternal fruitfulness.

Now unless we submit to *discipline, and imitate Jesus Christ*, He cannot acknowledge us as His pupils. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." A disciple is a scholar, and in this age we speak of a scholar with reverence and respect; we can hardly pay a higher compliment to a man than say he is a true scholar. A disciple of Jesus Christ is one whom He takes into His school to train for life on earth and in heaven; a student in His university, to take his full degree in truth and grace, to graduate with honours in the arts and science of Christianity. There must be the heart and mind of a scholar—sincerity, humility, simplicity, teachableness; "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Without these attributes of character no man has the soul of Christian discipleship. It is not by bare, hard facts that some scholarly writers arrest attention, but by the glow and colour of their style; the warmth and colour of style reveal the poet even in prose writing. And it is the warmth and glow of soul that makes the Christian disciple.

Self-denial is a clear Christian duty. "Teach self-denial," said Sir Walter Scott, "and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than

ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer." This is precisely what Jesus Christ did, and His ideal state infinitely exceeds the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, for His ideal of laws and politics does not simply exist in the region of speculation but in the domain of practical life. But self-denial, to be truly Christian, must always have an adequate motive. To some good people you have to say, Comfort yourselves for Christ's sake, while to others you have to say, Deny yourselves for His sake. Even Christians are apt to push the best principles to extremes, and you have to recall them to moderation. Of David Hill, the splendid missionary to China, it is said : " His one fault seemed to be that which finally made his beloved friend Crossette of the American Presbyterian Mission succumb, namely, too much austerity in living." The best of us stammer a good deal in our thinking—perhaps more in our thinking than in our speaking. It is therefore necessary to come back to first principles in Christian living. We must not serve God as task-work, but from love. Self-denial must not be practised in the spirit of slavery, but sonship ; not as mortification, but enlightened self-sacrifice. It must be the giving up of a privilege, blessing, or real good, that we may strengthen others in goodness. This must be done till it becomes the chief joy of life, till we feel there is really no hardship in plain food, plain clothing, and a plain home—a feeling which comes to us when we get a truly Christian heart.

Jesus Christ set us the example of *submission to the greatest suffering.* " Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases." He did this by becoming human, but chiefly by

his intense sympathy with men, which is exhausting to the nervous system—a form of suffering perhaps only known in its bitterness by ministers and church-workers, who have to carry the burden of the sorrows and sufferings of other people in silence. Christ's suffering began in infancy. Tyranny threatened His life as soon as He was born, and His parents had to flee with Him into Egypt. His presentation in the temple was accompanied with the offering of penury. This was the simple introduction to a life of manifold suffering. He suffered physically, mentally, socially, vicariously. He felt the social indecency of death by crucifixion; all His manly and pure instincts were offended by it. His sufferings in every form were not for Himself but for others. We must suffer vicariously in a subordinate but very real sense; suffer for the Church, the nation, the family, the individual, and the world. We must accept Christ's conditions of service. We cannot expect better treatment from the world than He met with. He reasons with those who are reluctant to submit to inconvenience and annoyance in his service or think their lot a hard one: "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." Discipline is sure to meet us in one form or other in all life lived among men and for men; and we must not dream of running away from our cross, but bravely endure it. Even nature inflicts pain, because God values character coming out of suffering; and if physical suffering creates fine mental and moral qualities, God is willing

to have it so. If we could see the whole of any one life it might be found that the advantage outweighs the pain and sorrow. We think what a hard lot the Israelites had in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, and what painful discipline Moses himself endured. The people seemed much better off in Egypt and more tried in the wilderness, so we sometimes seem more tried as Christians than we were in our unregenerate days ; but Jesus Christ means us to get finer elements of character out of our struggles and persecutions. We have to face the question : Shall we live for our own ease and enjoyment, or willingly suffer to develop our character ? We must submit to the greatest hardships like soldiers on a long and difficult campaign.

One essential qualification of Christian discipleship is *bearing the cross.* By the cross we understand something uncongenial to human nature, which we consent to endure because it is the will of God. We commonly speak of any kind of trouble as a cross, and it may be bravely borne in the name of Jesus Christ. "But, properly speaking," says Dr. Stalker, "the cross of Christ is what is borne in the act of confessing Him or for the sake of His work. When anyone makes a stand for principle, because he is a Christian, and takes the consequences in the shape of scorn or loss, this is the cross of Christ. The pain you may feel in speaking to another in Christ's name, the sacrifice of comfort or time you may make in engaging in Christian work, the self-denial you may exercise in giving up your means that the cause of Christ may spread at home and abroad, the reproach you may have to bear by indentifying yourself with militant

causes or despised persons, because you believe they are on Christ's side—in such conduct lies the cross of Christ."

There must be the complete crucifixion of the sinful self, that there may be a new and nobler manhood. "I have been crucified with Christ," says Paul. The old Paul of the flesh is dead, and there is now a new Paul of the spirit, living a new life after Jesus Christ. He adds in another place: "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof." This killing of the old unregenerate self, nailing unholy passions to the cross, is what all must submit to who become Christians. It is this dying with Christ that makes men of us. "Till He hung on it," says Dr. Stalker, "the Cross was the symbol of slavery and vulgar shame; but He converted it into the symbolism of heroism, self-sacrifice, and salvation." We must die to self before we can live unto God. A river fertilises the banks through which it flows until it becomes dry in its bed—having given itself for the fruitfulness of the soil around it and lost itself in the soil. So we must glory in the cross, that our death may become our highest and noblest life—as the river lives in the fruitfulness of the land. There is no way of living truly till we are crucified with Christ. Life is by death. The corn placed in the earth must die before it can live.

By the cross we understand *the discipline of life endured in the cause of God*, because by it we not only suffer but become the reproach of the world. The cross is the symbol of suffering, as illustrated in the whole stream of Church history. Noah had to bear the scorn and contempt of the

antediluvians. Moses deliberately accepted the cross—"esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Paul and his comrades "went without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ." Others had every form of trial as indicated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And the cross is still inseparably associated with Christianity. In the experience of Christians there are the keen wintry frosts and cold spring winds of discipline as well as the flowers and balmy breezes of summer. No time or circumstance will ever alter the language of Jesus Christ: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." These words distinctly mark out the duty of self-denial, submission to suffering, and the obligation of the active imitation of Jesus Christ. This one Scripture shows for all time the unchangeable conditions of Christian discipleship. If we will sail with Christ in the ship we must face all the dangers of the sea and be exposed to the storms and winds of the ocean. The only alternative offered the disciple is absolute submission to discipline: "If any man cometh to Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." These near relations are among the dearest objects of our earthly affections. However, we must renounce them all in a self-denying manner when they stand in the clear way of duty. The crucifixion must be suffered. It was submitted to in early Christian times; and in India, and in China, and among Jewish converts to Christianity it is submitted

to in this age. Jesus Christ still says: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that doth not take his cross, and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me." Here He distinctly and deliberately claims for Himself the supreme place in our affections. He cannot take a secondary and subordinate place. We must act in a way worthy of Him, must delight to honour Him, must uphold the dignity and glory of His Godhead. St. Paul speaks of "the goodness and severity of God"; and we have the same elements in the teaching and conduct of Jesus Christ. But the severity is only exercised to uproot and destroy the evil that is in us, that there may be room for goodness to grow.

Peter's mind lingered on the sacrifice of home and home-comforts, the giving up of friends and relations for Christ, and said for himself and his brethren: "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee; what then shall we have?" Is not Peter's question intensely selfish? Does he not too much betray the mercenary spirit, the narrow soul of the hireling? Is it not saying in effect, if we are only good what shall we get for being good? Surely goodness itself and the essential blessedness growing out of it are ample reward—making us think of the striking element in the Persian's prayer: "O God, do something for the bad; Thou hast done everything for the good in making them good." Are we to be bribed for being good, like foolish and weak parents bribe their children to become obedient? Or are we to think simply about our own advantages, and not about the good of others

and the honour of Jesus Christ? Yet He did say in response to Peter: "Everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life." We have probably spiritualised this too much in the past, when it no doubt points to substantial temporal blessings as well. And these material advantages of Christian civilisation will greatly multiply as Christianity spreads and the world grows godly.

It is with infinite wisdom and love that Jesus Christ has for ever connected Christianity and discipline. Had Christians no cross to bear, the probability is they would unduly place their affections on things of earth. Sanctified discipline saves them from thus perverting their affections. Perhaps Job himself was never less attached to earth or more submissive to the will of God than he was when called to bear the cross. It was when under the singularly permitted trial of Satan he had lost health, property, and family, that he said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Paul seems to have been detached from earth by means of discipline. It was after the sanctification of great and painful sufferings that he expressed a "desire to depart and to be with Christ." By the purifying and ennobling influence of discipline, as one says, "God restrains our passions, exercises our virtues, detaches us from the world, elevates us to the hope of a better life, and displays the glory of that admirable providence which governs us." Trial is frequently God's best method of perfecting our

Christian manhood. When disappointment after disappointment, sorrow after sorrow, trial after trial, have come upon us,—like waves chasing each other on the ocean in the storm,—we have been driven to seek refuge in God, and found a sweetness and joy to which we were strangers before. There is something infinitely precious in Christian discipline. It lays the soul prostrate before God, saying: "Let Him do as seemeth Him good." The apparent confusions and mysteries of God's providence are only confused and mysterious to us in our ignorance. To God they are all clear and effective. It has been very truly said: "Nature is Divine art unknown to us, but still Divine art; chance is wise direction, which we simply fail to understand; discord is perfect harmony, which we do not comprehend; and partial evil is universal good in the painful process of its operation." One everlasting truth is becoming more and more visible as the ages go on—somehow or other all things are working toward a beneficial issue to those who love God and are obedient to His will. Even the thunderstorm gives us a purified atmosphere, and death itself is the door of life.

The discipline of life is constant. We cannot make one supreme effort and end all difficulties; the discipline will never cease till our probation terminates. Two phrases are employed in the Gospels: "bare his cross," and "take up his cross daily." Both phrases express the obligation of our willing endurance of constant discipline, and indicate with remarkable force this sentiment, that no man is worthy of Christian discipleship who is not perfectly prepared to

suffer pain, inconvenience, and even martyrdom, rather than desert Jesus Christ or neglect duty.

The discipline of life has its own individuality. In its form and degree the particular discipline is meant for one person only. Perhaps you say, I am tried like nobody else; and it may be so. But you do not know the sorrows and sufferings of others as you know your own. However, if you are tried like no one else, Jesus Christ intends it to be so. He puts one Christian through one form of discipline and another Christian through another form—and this is only as men act in human society. Parents and teachers find it necessary to treat different children differently; their natures are so different that precisely the same kind of treatment is not suitable to each. Medical men also treat different patients differently because of the great constitutional differences. They do not group cases but make an individual diagnosis, studying and treating each case by itself with scientific exactness. So Jesus Christ adapts different modes of treatment to His disciples. And just as medical men adopt severe measures occasionally to effect a difficult cure, Jesus Christ has to send a painful cross to His followers. It almost amounts to the pain of actual crucifixion; heart and hope seem to depart, their sense of loss and loneliness is simply unspeakable. Some great crisis in their life may come, and they may wish freedom from heavy suffering. There may be the loss of fortune, or husband, or wife, or family, or health, or of something which completely changes their whole existence. The spring will come, the flowers will bloom, the birds will

sing, the sun will shine, and business and pleasure will go on as of old; but the cross will have altered their life, and the world will never be the same to them again. The soul must pass through these strange experiences to learn all its lessons and finish its education.

So all Christians need to be fully prepared for *the manifold forms of discipline.* Not to go to meet trouble, as it will come soon enough, and when it comes will be bitter enough. To have it once will be sufficient without enduring it in anticipation and then in fact. Do not, however, be surprised when the cross comes. It only makes trials greater when you are suddenly startled by them, like an unexpected thunderstorm coming upon you, or the bankruptcy of one you thought to be a particularly strong man, or the breach of a friendship by one you fondly imagined would always be true to you. Jesus Christ honestly tells you the cross will always come to you; some days it will be heavier than others in itself, and some days you will have less courage and strength to bear it, but He will be true to you to the end of life's battle. As He bore His cross for you He knows all the weight and bitterness of the cross; but the disciple in his measure must have the experience and discipline of the Master. However, this will give a new depth and colour to life, a new sweetness to light, and a new glory to character.

Do not be anxious to manufacture crosses for yourselves by personal mortification. To make crosses by the infliction of bodily suffering is pagan and not Christian—the heathen idea of meriting heaven by self-mortification. Ritualists

and Romanists are making Christianity a thing of the letter against the spirit; the form takes the place of the power and spirituality of religion, and evil is treated as if it were in the flesh and not in the soul. The instruments of Lenten discipline are horrible to think of; and these are largely employed in the Protestant Church of England. It is time we had in our country a revival of the better elements of Puritanism. Evidently Nonconformity has a great work to do in England to save it from priestism.

Now when *discipline comes it will test your character and principles.* In prosperity, in health and joy, men hardly know of what material they are made, and other people hardly know them. They are borne along on the stream of favourable influences, and are as happy as the day is long. But let the severity of the cross come and they are laid prostrate in sorrow, startled and driven almost to despair. The cross will always be a heavy weight reluctantly carried, or a holy delight; a burden or a glory—a burden we are compelled to bear like Simon of Cyrene, or a chosen glory as in the case of Paul, to whom the cross meant the highest honour and the greatest joy. The disciples do not always see how the mystery of pain is to produce blessedness. "It may be as difficult to detect the oak-leaf in the acorn as in the stone. Yet the acorn may be converted into an oak; the stone will always be a stone." Out of discipline we shall get mind, feeling, character. The acorn of Christianity, planted in fitting soil, will, under the laws of Jesus Christ, grow into a splendid oak and be green for ever.

Another essential condition of Christian discipleship is

the diligent and faithful imitation of Jesus Christ. To follow Him is to believe in the Gospels and embrace their doctrines; to approve and conform to the rules of life which Christ laid down; to be persuaded of the truth of the mysteries of Christianity, the holiness of Christ's laws, and the divinity of His character and mission.

To follow Jesus Christ is *to accept His teaching as of supreme authority in religion.* Popularly speaking, a follower holds the opinions and principles of his leader. In theology we say a follower of Calvin or Arminius. In philosophy we say a follower of Locke, Hamilton, or Spencer. In art we say a follower of Raphael, Bartolozzi, or Ruskin. In science we say a follower of Darwin, Wallace, or Dallinger. In politics we say a follower of Beaconsfield or Gladstone. And in religion we say a follower of Jesus Christ, because the Christian is a mental and moral imitator of Him. The centre of authority in religion is not the Fathers, the Pope, or the Church, but the Lord and Head of the Church. An Anglican clergyman said to me a little while ago: "How do you account for the fact that many who begin life in scepticism or evangelical beliefs end in accepting the absurdities of Romanism?" We had been speaking of Newman, Manning, and the Marquis of Ripon. I said in reply: They simply renounce their mental and moral manhood. Both mentally and morally they are under obligation to imitate Jesus Christ; but they grow weary of the manly search after truth, and by one final effort give up intellect and conscience to the authority and keeping of the priest. They want to be free from the mental and moral stress and

strain of their position; want life no longer to be a spiritual and intellectual probation as Jesus Christ made it, but one of mechanical authority. So the Church must judge, determine, act for them; be the keeper of mind and conscience. It is so very often with Ritualists who commonly say: "As laymen we are not competent to form an opinion, and therefore leave all matters of doctrine and conscience to our vicar." This conduct is full of danger to Protestantism—and is in reality mental and moral cowardice, is, in fact, ignoring their manhood.

Jesus Christ *claims absolute authority over personal belief and life.* When we speak of style in art, we say after the old masters or some modern school. When we speak of faith and morals, we say after Confucius, Buddha, or Zoroaster. But when we speak of spiritual religion and belief, we say after Jesus Christ—showing that Christianity is both a Divine life and creed. Right belief is necessary to a right life, yet the creed may be right and the life wrong; and in modern days we often substitute the orthodoxy of the head for the orthodoxy of the life. This is an error full of danger. Jesus Christ therefore placed the emphasis on character, and asked for the eloquent tribute of a holy life. In this age we hear the cry, Not creed but character is the standard by which Christians must be weighed and measured; and then, if we must still have diverse modes of faith and worship, the question will be: What kind of men and women do you raise in your churches? Are they noble or mean, sweet or bitter, full of charity or stricken with prejudice and bigotry, Christlike and loving the light, or those who

hug the darkness and have no part in the kingdom of truth and right? The great need of the times is quiet, unostentatious, Christlike living, exhibiting the fruits and tempers of Christianity in ordinary life among the people—"making," as Bishop Wilson remarks, "reason and the will of God prevail." There must be the culture and harmony of all the moral powers, a full and well-balanced character springing from a loyal faith in the gospel of Christ.

To follow Jesus Christ is indicative of *Christian progress.* You must patiently follow Christ till you "attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the fulness of Christ." This is the manhood of Christianity, and you must be true to Him and to the interests of the human race; brave, having the courage of your enlightened convictions; strong, in a strength which is not yours naturally but is available by grace; earnest in all which is for the glory of God and the salvation of men; mature, with a mind and will of your own, thinking and acting for yourselves; large-hearted, having broad and intelligent sympathies; robust in character, stable in virtue, and in every sphere quitting yourselves like men.

Jesus Christ is anxious to impress on His disciples the impossibility either of becoming or continuing Christians without self-denial and the active imitation of His goodness. And this is evident if we simply consider that He acts on fixed principles which He can never violate. To do so would be to go against His Father's character and government. The very reason why God condemns impurity in

others and holds it in utter abhorrence is His own essential purity. The form of the argument in Holy Scripture is this: "But like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." The Divine holiness is the reason why we are to be holy, and the argument by which purity is urged upon us. So Jesus Christ says: "Follow Me." Become like Me. Live like Me. And the power of His sweet reasonableness, goodness, gentleness, influence us to deeper personal consecration. We want to be good because Jesus Christ is good. We feel we have the capacity of becoming good like Him; that He was not only the pattern of goodness, but through Him we may get power to reach goodness. The standard of virtue is the character of God: "Ye shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." And Jesus Christ said, I am like My Father, and this is the reason why I want you to be like Me. You cannot be My disciples in any other way. Christianity was introduced into the world to make men better. The great end of Christ's mission was the destruction of evil, "to destroy the works of the devil." The law and nature of God alike determine that universal holiness shall characterise Christians. His Word strictly forbids indulgence in vice and strongly enforces virtue, representing all spiritual lawlessness as inconsistent with a state of grace and opposed to the Christian character. Leaving only one conclusion—that unless we submit to Christian sanctification we cannot be His disciples.

This is illustrated in church life. People are brought

under the preaching of the gospel. The Holy Spirit applies Divine truth to their conscience and judgment. They are convinced of sin, but do not yield to conviction, do not forsake sin and sincerely endeavour to lead a better life; "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," giving up the sin of their constitution, education, business, profession, social environment; not only all disgusting sin but all pleasing and refined sin. And being unwilling to forsake all sin whatsoever, they cannot be Christ's disciples.

The same deep underlying truth appears if we consider the cross of life. One illustrative case is conclusive—the rich young man. It was not enough for him to feel good desires and to entertain exalted opinions of Jesus Christ. What was required in his case as in ours was not theory, opinion, speculation about Christ, but faithful imitation. "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me" is what Jesus Christ said to the young man. The pith is in the last point. He must really become like Christ, get Christ's idea, spirit, character, and submit in all things to the will of the Father. He would be a better man when he was poor. He would find the highest freedom in self-denying service, in living for God's glory and the good of others. We must deny ourselves to find a larger liberty. The young man had kept the Commandments in the hard letter from his youth, like many young men to-day, but not kept them in the spirit and aim of the Decalogue. He must get the very soul of religion. Jesus Christ was severe but kind. The young man went away sorrowful, but clinging

to his wealth, refusing to take up his cross, and so he could not be Christ's disciple. But were not his eyes opened to the possibility of greater goodness than he previously dreamt of? Self-sacrifice as taught by Jesus Christ is always meant to free us from some wrong, to give us the proper possession of ourselves, the freedom to be right and to do right as the children of God. He did not say to the young man money is a very bad thing, and it is wicked to be rich; but showed him that spiritual riches are infinitely better.

To follow Jesus Christ is *openly to confess Him before men.* Not unwisely to cast pearls before swine, but at the right time and in the true spirit to bear testimony for Christ in face of the intellectual scorn of sceptics and the social contempt of the wealthy; especially to acknowledge Him in business, recreation, and in company by pure and noble living. We are under no circumstances to be ashamed of Him, for that is to be ashamed of truth, justice, purity, love, and goodness; ashamed of all that is noblest and most manly in life. Christians have been far too reticent in the profession of discipleship. We go among artists and they talk of art; among merchants and they talk of merchandise; among literary men and they talk of literature; among scientists and they talk about science; among politicians and they talk about politics; among Christians and they talk about anything but Christianity. We may be days or weeks among Christians without knowing that they are professedly Christian. It is time we learned from the age to bring Christianity to the front. If laughed at we must be firm and unwavering. Some opponents of Christianity

do not argue, they simply sneer like Professor Huxley, a few years ago, in the *Nineteenth Century*, on the question of the Gadarean swine. The French say: "He laughs well who laughs last." Professor Huxley did not laugh last in that controversy with Dr. Wace. When the Pharisees opposed Jesus Christ they derided Him and laughed Him to scorn. They did not honestly argue. When the barrister has no case he abuses the witness; and when unbelievers cannot find a good reason they sneer. This is too commonly the case in political and ecclesiastical controversy. It as an old and a modern method employed against Christianity. When will Christians learn that they have nothing to fear from sneers? The Pharisees deriding Jesus Christ could not destroy His cause; and in this age sneering at Christianity cannot stop its progress. We must not be too much troubled by opposition, too anxious to answer opponents, or waste too much time and strength in replying to them. Persecution from the outside cannot hurt us, but internal strife may effect what the sneers of our enemies cannot possibly accomplish. We must go on quietly minding our proper work, unmoved by outward storms, but avoiding the troubled waters of controversy among ourselves, ever seeking the calm sea of truth, unity, and love, for this is one of the noblest forms of confessing Christ.

Following Jesus Christ means a good deal more than appears on the surface; it means following Him *at all costs in this age.* There must be complete self-surrender to attain the noblest manhood; and no man can come to his best by selfishness in any form or degree. The Galilean fishermen

had to forsake boats, nets, and fishing-tackle; that is to say, they had to forsake all the apparent means of an honest and independent livelihood. Matthew had to abandon his profitable tax-gathering. Some to-day have to give up lucrative investments of a doubtful character, to forsake good situations of an evil nature, which might easily lead them into sin. It means in some instances following Jesus Christ to poverty, persecution, Gethsemane, Calvary; it means offering him health, wealth, reputation, and all for this life. Some say, But does not the gospel mean good news, glad tidings, great joy, and not sorrow, suffering, loss, and anguish? Yes, it means good news and great joy; but it also means bearing the cross till we find our greatest honour and blessedness in suffering and service for Jesus Christ. Catherine Gurney, writing to her sister, Mrs. Fowell Buxton, says: "Supposing thee had always remained at home, thee would be sure to have been spared some suffering and many cares thee hast now had, but how much more *stagnant* thy mind would have been, and how far less thy character and virtues would most likely have been called forth." The discipline of sorrow and suffering is to call forth and develop character.

To follow Jesus Christ is to enter every phase and form of life, to enter into *His deepest sorrows and highest joys.* He tasted great joy as well as great sorrow. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross." He saw the coming triumphs of the gospel; saw that multitudes of men would bow at the foot of the Cross, penitent, believing, and would ulti-

mately enter glory; saw that nation after nation would be won to Christianity, and finally the kingdoms of the world be gathered into the kingdom of God; and this vision of the future cheered and gladdened Him even as He hung upon the Cross, and in part at least robbed death of its terrible sting and gave Him a triumphant feeling of joy. Among the sons of men He was pre-eminently the "Man of Sorrows"; but it may be in the past Christians have thought of the sorrow of Jesus Christ out of all proportion, and unintentionally suppressed the idea of His deep and real joy. Indeed, all through His earthly life He had true joy, innocent enjoyment in pure social pleasures; for He was not a hermit but social in character, liking company, with its good fellowship and elevated intercourse. He attended a marriage after His terrible temptation in the wilderness. There was nothing narrow, weak, and sour in Him; He was genial, broad, healthy, and joyous; and this shows that Christianity is sociable in character, and that the spirit of asceticism is really foreign to the gospel. Indeed, Christianity goes to the lowest depth of human sorrow and to the highest point of joy in all earthly life; and this is perhaps the peculiar power of Christianity in the individual life of the Christian, as it was the peculiar power in the life of Jesus Christ. The joy of Jesus was a true and real joy even when His sorrow was the deepest. So the disciples of Jesus Christ have blended joy and sorrow on earth. The joy of Jesus was the joy of service and the joy of self-sacrifice; and this joy of service and self-sacrifice the disciples were to experience: "My joy fulfilled in them-

selves." Gladness should have its place in the Christian life as well as grief. The light-heartedness of the lark is musical and joy-inspiring. The laughter of children is more engaging than their tears. The nightingale is moved to sing by its happiness. It may be perfectly true that "the day is misspent in which you have not laughed at least once."

Yet human life was not exactly meant for laughter and amusement, though it was meant for joy—and joy may be holy as well as sorrow. Jesus Christ said: "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Your sorrow is turned into joy now, and will be so for ever. Shelley speaks of the sweetest song and the saddest thought. This is Paul's statement of his own experience and that of his brethren: "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Christianity alone can harmonise the singular paradox.

CHAPTER III.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Bible-Reading of the People.

If the Christian Scriptures are of mere human origin, simply on a level with Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Milton, and the works of our men of genius, it is singular that people, age after age, have clung to the Bible, especially the Jews, when the Bible utters the most biting condemnation of their conduct. The Bible must be given by inspiration of God, for, looking at human nature as we know it to-day and know it in all history, no sixty men living in different ages and apart from one another could or would have written a book so human and yet so Divine. Such is the marvellous character of the Bible, that no sixty men would have dreamed of attempting to write it, supposing them to be equal to the task, because it utterly condemns their thoughts, motives, and actions. Men would not of themselves be likely to write down their own condemnation, unless swayed by some strong reason apart from nature. It is not in man to do this. Nor could men have written the Holy Book if inclined to make the effort. Look at the case

for one moment. It stands thus: men have been addicted to idolatry in all lands and in all ages—and Holy Scripture declares that there is only one true God to be served and adored; men have everywhere sought the indulgence of their animal passions and their intellectual gratifications—and Holy Scripture claims the subordination of the whole nature to the glory of God; men in all ages and nations have singularly departed from virtue—and Holy Scripture, and especially the four Gospels and Epistles, inculcate the most elevated and comprehensive morality. Evidently, therefore, the Holy Scriptures are the revelation of God. Men in their senses would never have written the Bible and then suffered martyrdom in its defence, had they not known it and believed it to be the Book of God. Human nature is not so built that men deliberately die for a known falsehood.

Jesus Christ strongly contended for the *Divine origin* of Holy Scripture. This is clearly seen in His controversy with the Jews (John v. 30–47). In the former part of the chapter He refers to His character, His Godhead, His mission and office, and distinctly states His mediatorial subordination to the Father. But he refers also to His remarkable credentials. He does not bear witness of Himself. The Father, the Baptist, and His own works performed among them in open day bear witness of Him—supply the strongest possible evidence that He was indeed the Son of God. Yet, as if the testimony of the Father, the Baptist, and His own works were insufficient, He refers them to evidence gathered from the sacred Scriptures daily read in their synagogues. They had their scribes and rabbis, whose

professional duty it was to read and expound the oracles of God. And the Jews, we are informed, boasted of the flourishing state of theological learning at the time Jesus Christ appeared among them. They talked proudly of the beauties of their wisdom and the glories of their law; but they seem largely to have pondered the sacred page for the gratification of a speculative curiosity or an ambitious mind, and so missed the deeper and truer meaning of God's Written Word — missed the substance and grasped the shadow.

We see from this that it is not enough for us to become familiar with the letter of Holy Scripture if Jesus Christ is deeply to influence our daily life among men. The truth must influence our thought, motive, emotion, conscience, understanding, judgment, deeds,—influence our inner and outer life,—and the Bible only yields its highest evidence to spiritually enlightened and sympathetic souls. It is very possible to be studious in the mere literature of the Bible without knowing the truth experimentally, or receiving evidence of its Divine origin in our deepest consciousness. And so, like Jesus Christ, should we not press the deeper and larger meaning of the truth upon people who are perplexed with the teaching of Holy Scripture?

Here Jesus Christ was reasoning with a people who professed to receive the Bible as a Divine revelation, and who appeared willing to abide by the decision of the Written Word. If it were so, He was prepared to join issue with them on that point, provided they did not rest in the mere letter of Scripture, but searched into its deep

spiritual meaning. Should not we deal with people in the same fashion? When Holy Scripture is referred to as the rule of life, people are under obligation to examine the Bible for themselves, not superficially but thoroughly; not to go over the inspired pages as if Scripture were a romance, a story told for their entertainment, a book put into their hands to kill time, but to digest and assimilate God's Word mentally and morally, making it part of themselves. We are to grow in Christian knowledge that we may grow in grace; Christian knowledge is the basis of growth in grace. We must know God's will that we may do it; know our privileges that we may embrace them; know the resources of grace placed at our disposal that we may avail ourselves of them. Knowledge precedes obedience, as the flower the fruit, the fountain the river, the cause the effect.

If we follow the Authorised Version, we must regard Jesus Christ as giving advice to the Jews to examine the Scriptures for evidence of His Messiahship and a knowledge of the way to eternal life. The Revised Version is more correctly given: "Ye search the Scriptures." In either case, if mankind would find Jesus Christ to the joy of their heart, they must search for Him in His Word—search as for hid treasures and precious pearls. It was this reasonable line of action which drew from St. Paul his high commendation of the Bereans: "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." With open minds they accepted instruction, then tested the teaching by docu-

mentary evidence. And this, we submit, is the only reasonable way to proceed in the study of the Bible. We must look into the truth of Divine revelation for ourselves, test all questions of doctrine by the sacred Documents, and not by preconceived notions, or by the Prayer-Book, church creeds, confessions of faith, the bulls of the pope, or any human authority. We must simply regard the mind of the Master.

What shall we say in self-justification for neglecting to read the Bible? We have found time to read other books—some of them worthless, others positively injurious—and all the while the grandest Book of all has remained unexamined. In this way we have sustained intellectual and spiritual loss. The Bible is the most wonderful of books; in it we have history, poetry, philosophy, sanitation, law, government, literature, economics, and it is consequently of the greatest educational value. By the Bible the young people of Britain are taken out of their insular position, and their reason and imagination engaged with other peoples and other lands — with Jews, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Persians, Syrians; but especially they are instructed in things concerning salvation, and all else is as nothing to this —is only as chaff to wheat, and as the husk to the kernel.

And what shall we say of a subtle and designing priesthood which keeps the Bible from the people? The Church of Rome not only discourages the examination of Scripture, but places the authority of the Church above the Bible; takes away the right of private judgment, and keeps men in spiritual and mental slavery. James Macdonell, of the

Times, a born Romanist, says "that the Roman Catholic Church always seemed to him the most implacable foe to liberty," adding, "the individual reason and conscience are the supreme judges of theological truth." And so he says further: "Both High Churchism and Calvinism are fated to be doomed to extinction by that moral sense which is the last court of theological appeal, and which ultimately determines the creed of Christendom; by that sense of right and wrong which no hierarchy can ultimately deprave, and which all general councils of the Church are powerless to conquer, as the human arm is to keep back the tides of the sea. It is the theology of the conscience and not of the clergy that is to be the Christianity of the future." Jesus Christ, in reading and expounding the Bible, appealed to the reason and conscience of the people. The ultimate appeal always lies here. Yet Cardinal Manning spoke bitterly against private judgment even on the part of the Ritualists, who are nearest to Rome in the Anglican Church: "Ritualism is private judgment in gorgeous raiment, wrought about with divers colours . . . every fringe in an elaborate cope worn without authority is only a distinct and separate act of private judgment." It is regarded as a crime for man to think for himself, and bars the way to Romanism. Rome fears to face the mind of man, fears spiritual and intellectual freedom, as the despot dreads political freedom, and the charlatan the full revelation of the truth.

Jesus Christ contended for *the Divine law of continuity* in Holy Scripture. He said: "The Scripture cannot be broken." The Bible is the biography of God; it tells the

story of His gracious purposes and deeds, records His life-thoughts and His actions; its leading idea is the Christian redemption. Jesus Christ is Himself the centre and unity of Holy Scripture. Though the Bible is a library of books—books composed in different ages, in different styles, and in different localities—yet it becomes one Book in the hands of Jesus Christ. He claimed that all the Scriptures related to Him: "They testify of Me." Were He taken out of the Bible there would be no Bible left. In the synagogue at Nazareth He read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He then closed the Book and sat down. All eyes were turned on Him. He immediately added: "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The congregation was first deeply impressed, then incredulous, and finally startled and perplexed; hence they inquired, "Is not this Joseph's son?" The direct and strong reference in the remarkable reading was to Himself. Indeed, the whole Bible applied supremely to Him; but there were special points peculiarly applicable to Him, and men could test the case by separate parts which were crucial and final—as the chemist tests bodies by the presence of essential elements, and the lawyer tests a case by material facts.

He spent the afternoon of the day on which He rose from the dead in giving a Bible-reading to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. He opened to them the Scriptures in a wonderful

and impressive way. He showed them that the whole Bible had supreme reference to Him. To the disciples He said, You are evidently sad and disappointed men, but if you think the matter over, "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" After all, should you be so cast down? Should you not rather rejoice over the completed scheme of redemption? Are you not taking low, narrow, unworthy views of things? "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken." When the Bible is handled by Jesus Christ can we for one moment doubt that it is the Book of God, and hangs together by the law of continuity? The hearts of these men were strangely touched as they journeyed with Him along the common road: "Was not our heart burning within us, while He spoke to us in the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Is it not so to-day, when Jesus Christ speaks to us in the Holy Book? A spiritual fire burns up depraved thoughts and evil inclinations, sets our hearts on fire as no other literature does or can.

It is significant that Jesus Christ embraced the whole written revelation in His instruction to the disciples: "Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." There is good reason to believe that Moses wrote a large part of the Pentateuch, or, at least, that it was written under his eye. It is nowhere stated by our Lord or His apostles that Moses penned every word or paragraph. But it is said: "If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me, for He wrote of Me." No one who really

accepts the teaching of Jesus Christ can disparage the Old Testament. In speaking of the Scriptures, Christ always recognised their truth and worth. But He distinguished the weightier matters in the law from the less important, and always placed the spiritual infinitely above the ritual. We must not kill the spirit by the letter, nor conceal Christ. The Jews read the Scriptures, but missed Jesus Christ. We are in the same danger. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is the one Speaker and links it with the Old.

As Jesus Christ placed His hand on the Old Testament Scriptures He said: You examine these Scriptures, and if you do so with fair and open mind you will find the prophecies, the law, the psalms, contribute their burden of testimony to Me as the Messiah. He appealed to the Scriptures as a final authority in matters of religion. "Have ye not read in the Scriptures?" If the writers of the Bible could have invented the story of the Christian redemption they would have been as clever as Jesus Christ. How can any man object to the miracle of inspiration who truly believes in a living and omnipotent God? The Church of Jesus Christ is said to be a great thought. It is also a great act—a deed of redemption running through the ages and binding the ages together. But the Bible places our golden age not in the distant past—it is in the future under Jesus Christ. We must not simply talk of the grand days of old, but of the splendid days to come, when the purpose of God in His Son is fully accomplished. The former will have no glory by reason of the glory

which excelleth—as the glory of the midday sun exceeds the glory of the pale light of the moon and stars.

In this age we must certainly ponder "the scientific establishment of the uniformity of natural law, the historical account of the origin of the books of the Bible, and the comparative study of the growth of religion." But at the same time it must be admitted that all the research of men "has not added one sentence to the New Testament. That closes where it closed at first." Critical research does not make the Bible less necessary than formerly, or less final either. The Bible is still required for man's spiritual purification, just as the sun is still necessary notwithstanding all the knowledge of the solar system imparted by modern astronomers. The Higher Criticism and belief in Evolution have not led to any spiritual revival, or to any great movement for the conversion of sinners. The mind of the churches is too much diverted from the great mission of saving souls by the critical theories of the age. Young men especially are led away from the Bible by the theories of scientists and Higher Critics, and then too commonly led away from good and wholesome literature, and in danger of being carried down the stream of popular sentimentalism, so full of impurity in source and sea.

Jesus Christ read His Bible for *intellectual and spiritual culture.* Even He grew in wisdom and knowledge by reading and studying the Scriptures. And, like Him, we may greatly improve in mind and heart by becoming diligent biblical students. Large Christian knowledge is better

than large fortunes. There is no adequate, no possible substitute in all literature for Holy Scripture, either intellectually or spiritually. Trusting in mere human reason and rejecting the Bible is like rejecting the light of the sun and trusting to lamplight. It has been said that "the Higher Critics too often attempt to cut a milestone with a razor." It may be so with the most reckless of them, but not with moderate and capable men. Sir William Dawson says: "The strange thing about these Old Testament critics is that they have so little scientific knowledge or habit of thought. They confine themselves almost entirely to linguistical aspects, and shut their eyes to the testimony of science." His opinion is that the Higher Criticism will not occupy a permanent place in Christian development. He thinks destructive criticism in regard to the New Testament quite dead and gone. And in regard to the Old Testament he is of opinion that geology and archæology will more and more confirm the antiquity and trustworthiness of the Scripture narrative. Dr. Marcus Dods does not fear but welcomes the Higher Criticism. He thinks the popular jealousy of it arises from misconception. He regards the Higher Criticism as the necessity of increased knowledge, and says: "Give criticism a free hand. If some critics err, others will certainly discover and reject the error. The only cure for erroneous criticism is more criticism and better criticism." That is so, no doubt, but the danger is in the meantime that the people will suffer in their beliefs and morals by adverse criticism. Yet the great work of redemption stands as it did before criticism began to

trouble the people, and it will stand when the critics have said their last word. For the rest we may patiently and quietly wait, and read our Bibles very much as we used to do. There are careful and loyal-hearted scholars hard at work, as well as reckless and unbelieving ones. The truth will stand like a rock, the false will shift like the sand.

There have always been favourable and unfavourable criticisms of the Divine Book from the days of Jesus Christ to the present hour. But the Bible lives to-day, though its death and burial have been predicted a thousand times. Jesus Christ vindicated the Bible against the unspiritual, narrow, unbelieving criticism of the Sadducees, and the overloading, formal, material criticism of the Pharisees. In the best sense He was a Higher or the Highest Critic. He faced all the difficulties of fair and unfair criticism. He never pleaded for mental stagnation, knowing as He did the value of truth and the search for truth. And we must face criticism without fear or misgiving for the future of the Word of God. We cannot reasonably expect to be without difficulties in reading the Bible; when these difficulties occur we must admit that God knows more than we see, and so we must bow to His authority. The child does not expect to master all his hard lessons at once; and he sometimes thinks he will never be able to master many of them. By and by he begins to see the meaning a little, gathers courage to go on, and finally understands his lesson-books. It is so in some measure with the scholars of Jesus Christ. And the outcome of the patient and persevering

Bible-reading is the wonderful elevation of soul and intellect.

No doubt Jesus Christ deeply read nature and human nature. This we gather from the beautiful illustrations He employed in His teaching, and from the fact that He knew what was in man, and so could easily classify the different types of men. We too should carefully read with great and growing interest both Bibles, and indeed become familiar with the Bible of nature and of human nature—for these two are God's Bibles, given for the instruction and guidance of the people. However, we need the written Bible to supplement and complete the Bible of nature. The Bible of nature declares God's glory, but cannot fully declare God's will. We require the written Word for spiritual light. The Alpine climber needs a human guide, and we cannot climb up the difficult way to heaven without a Divine Guide. In our most devout and spiritual moods, we say: "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." God's counsel to good men is embodied in Holy Scripture. The Bible is the revelation of the mind and will of our Father. He has given wise and kindly advice to His children of men. This advice we should read and ponder for our guidance in temptation and difficult duty. We may be placed at a great disadvantage for the continuous and profitable study of God's Word, but let us remember that Jesus Christ Himself obtained His knowledge of Holy Scripture in poverty and toil—and His was not a superficial knowledge of the Bible, which He picked up at

random, and which failed Him in controversy and temptation. He seems almost to have known Holy Scripture by heart, He quotes it so frequently and accurately. What an example He is for Christian working men in every age, especially remembering, as Dr. Stalker intimates, that in all probability Jesus Christ never possessed a copy of the Scriptures of His own, such a copy being too expensive for His limited means; and so He might have to request permission to read the copy in the synagogue. But the poorest Christian in these days may purchase a Bible for himself.

We must first of all read the Holy Scriptures devotionally for direct spiritual profit. Then we must read them critically —read the subject, trace out points by marginal references, Concordance, and the Oxford Bible, or the guidance of notes and comments. The New Revision is very helpful, and a paragraph Bible is necessary; but whatever aids we have, we must read the Bible through and through carefully, noting the foregoing and following context. If as Christians we live a fuller and worthier life we must know our Bible. Some of us have been anxious to live long, but coldly indifferent about living well, and careless about reading the Word of God. It is said of Thomas à Kempis: "He desired health of mind, not sickly craziness, or self-glorification in religion." If we attain this spirituality of mind we must get inspiration from Holy Scripture. The Psalmist says: "While I mused the fire burned." I kindled into enthusiasm by thought on the great things of Divine revelation.

Bible-reading has done much for the soul and intellect of

the leading nations of Christendom. This is not matter of conjecture, but a fact of history. The vital nations to-day are the Bible-reading nations: Britain, Germany, America. When governments and churches put a ban upon the Bible, they do their best to kill the mind and heart of a people. And when people with an open Bible and liberty of conscience have no taste for reading the Bible and no joy in its study, there is something seriously wrong with them spiritually or intellectually. Some evil or some misconception has got hold of them, and is in all probability gaining power over them. We may be told that English life is thin and meagre, crushed under a mass of facts; that it is destitute of the poetry, the splendid colouring, and the fine glow of imagination possessed say by Italy. But we gain in freedom, strength, and Christian manhood by reading and meditating upon the Word of God. We may be a very practical nation, yet cultivate the poetic side of our nature by reading the Bible, which is full of the finest poetry.

We are struck with the complete mastery which Jesus Christ had of the Old Testament Scriptures. He frequently made quotations from them. His notes and comments were subtle and profound, showing His deep insight into the teachings of the sacred oracles. Evidently He was deeply read in His Bible, and truly pondered its meaning. From His personal knowledge He was able to state the true facts when tempted by Satan and opposed by men. His enemies could not grapple with Him in argument or "entangle Him in His talk"; their utmost skill only brought defeat, and they "durst ask Him no more questions." The Sermon on the

Mount is a marvellous use of Old Testament Scripture, full of allusions to Old Testament principles and words. We learn from it the use of Old Testament history. It is clear that the Old Testament was able to make men wise unto salvation. When the rich man in the parable asked that one from the dead might go to inform his brethren of the terrible destiny of the wicked in the other world, the simple response was: "They have Moses and the prophets." As much as to say, they have already all which is essential to their salvation.

Now while we, like Jesus Christ, read the Holy Scriptures to improve in mind and heart, we must remember that it is not the intimate knowledge of the Bible we possess which will benefit us and others, but the use which we make of our knowledge. Just as it is not the intellectual gifts a man possesses which will be of advantage to him and to the community, but the use to which he puts his natural and acquired talents. We may have greater Christian knowledge, more consistent religious beliefs, loftier and wider Christian philosophy, truer ideas, deeper and broader sympathies—and all the while we may pray less and live a worse life than we did in the days of our greater ignorance. It is said that Martin Luther's wife once asked him this question: "Doctor, how is it that whilst subject to the papacy we prayed so often and with such fervour, whilst now we pray with the utmost coldness and very seldom?" This indicates a real danger, which all Christians must guard against. Intellectual growth does not necessarily involve spiritual growth. While, therefore, we are sincere and earnest students of Holy

Scripture, we must also sincerely and earnestly pray for Divine aid, that we may understand and profit by our biblical readings and researches.

Jesus Christ read *the profound and comprehensive meaning of Holy Scripture.* He read its bearing on life, work, character, destiny; read the principle, the reason, the motive, the Divine purpose in Scripture; read the significance and application of the written Word. This is the only proper method of reading the Bible in every age. We must dig deep and get down to the root-thoughts, and not simply dwell on the surface meaning. Dr. Parker intimates that there was the proper tone and right accent in Christ's reading of the Scriptures; the full rhythm and music, the whole piece was perfect in His hands. We are commonly content to read the simple letter, and are quite satisfied with the shallow and empty performance. The Bible wants readers like Jesus Christ, and then it would always be beautiful, fresh, and powerful. We must constantly read the deeper and larger meaning like He did, that we may be able to balance and harmonise the truths of Divine revelation. It is said that with Mendelssohn in musical composition, "the faultless proportion of symmetrical form was the first consideration. Then, and not till then, the ornaments were added." There is a Divine proportion in Scripture, and Jesus Christ looked at it, read the fundamental law, and explained all from that standpoint. If we read the Bible as we should it would open our eyes to wonderful visions of beauty and our ears to harmonies of sound infinitely charming, and half its difficulties would disappear.

Like Jesus Christ, we must read the Bible with *intelligent discrimination and appreciation.* We must principally regard the spirit and purpose of the sacred writer; must allow the full play of the writer's individuality—what we may perhaps call the human element in the Bible. For while all the writers were Divinely inspired, each wrote in his own style and with the full use of his own intellect; that is to say, it was not a mere mechanical inspiration. We cannot reasonably expect to comprehend everything in Holy Scripture. It would not be a Divine Book if it never went beyond us. The child cannot always understand the father; and we cannot always take in the full and comprehensive meaning of our Father in heaven. But we are not to reject the Bible because of its mysterious sayings, any more than we are to reject the light of nature because of the mysteries in it. We may understand things better further on in life, or else in eternity. At anyrate, we must carefully read the Bible, that we may not be driven about with every wind of doctrine, but maintain an intelligent belief in Christianity —a belief not soon or easily shaken. Some Christians have only traditional beliefs in Holy Scripture, and never examined the Bible for the satisfaction of their own intellect. The belief of such Christians often gives way in the storms of temptation, persecution, and unfriendly criticism.

There are many illustrations showing that Jesus Christ did not content Himself with the mere letter, but read the deeper and larger meaning of Holy Scripture. One is the reply to the young lawyer's question as to which is the greatest commandment of all—towering above the rest like

a great mountain rising grandly among a low range of hills. Jesus Christ showed that love to God and man lay at the basis of all true goodness and greatness. Another impressive illustration is the case of the woman with seven husbands, the perplexing question as they conceived it being—in the resurrection whose wife of the seven shall she be? He showed that they were simply considering the gross material aspect of the case—when there was another and infinitely sublimer view to be taken. In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God. Marriage therefore was no argument against the resurrection of the dead. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are dead, but the far deeper and truer view is that God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; for all are living unto Him. So again these Jews spoke of Messiah as David's son, and Jesus Christ inquired: "How then did David call Him Lord?" They had no reply. What wonderful Scripture exegesis we find here. How effectually Jesus Christ took hold of great leading principles, expounded and applied them. We are clever in our little way at criticising small words and small points of grammar, but He took hold of the pillars of truth and dealt effectually with fundamental laws. Apollos is said to have been "mighty in the Scriptures": he read them deeply, read them with spiritual insight, so read them as to grasp the true meaning. But with infinitely greater propriety this may be said of Jesus Christ. We too commonly read the mere letter, and may possibly be very learned in the letter; perhaps, like Apollos, we are skilled in word and speech;

are able to state facts like an historian, to reason about them like a logician, and to move the passions in sermons and speeches like an orator. But while we are grandly critical about words and phrases, though it may be giving the true import, we do not sufficiently enter into the spirit and meaning of Holy Scripture—do not get down to the soul and original signification of the Bible. And consequently we do not profit ourselves or others as we might and ought. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. We most of all in this age need the life.

Jesus Christ read Holy Scripture with profound *reverence*, and for us flippancy in reading the Bible is altogether out of place. This indeed is a complete disqualification for the examination of the Book of God. It may be that there is too general a decay of reverence in the England of to-day. This will be fatal if carried into Christianity. Without reverence there can be no individual nobility of character, and no national greatness of soul and intellect. There must be no idolatry of the mere letter, no prejudice, no levity of soul, but a becoming spirit, a true regard for Divine truth. We should compose ourselves into a proper frame of mind, and enter upon our examination with all possible gravity, as the issues of the investigation are of infinite moment.

Jesus Christ read Holy Scripture in true and sincere *faith*; we must also read the Bible in simple and sincere faith. The Bible is the Book of books. No other book ever gave the information which it communicates, or produced the spiritual effects which it produces. It is unique in the literature of the world. There is no second Bible among

all the nations to compare with it for one moment. We have not always absolute demonstration, but must trust. If we had full knowledge there would be no room for faith, no sphere for childlike trust. The Bible does not forbid but invites inquiry. We are exhorted to secure all the knowledge we can. But when we have pushed our investigations to the frontiers of the infinite, we must humbly trust where we cannot know and understand. We must not look upon God as a dumb Father, who will not or cannot speak to His children; yet he reasonably asks us to trust Him like children when His teaching goes beyond us, as the earthly child trusts the father when his words are startling or mysterious.

Jesus Christ read His Bible with *honesty of purpose*, and we must read it in the same sincere and honest way; not to find in Holy Scripture a meaning which is not really there, or to find a larger meaning than is fairly there, any more than we should seek in a sovereign more than twenty shillings. Nor must we read the Holy Scriptures to find what is congenial to our human nature or what inclination may suggest, but we must simply read the Bible to ascertain the truth. Even if the truth condemns us we must be manly and honest enough to accept it and act according to it. We must not attempt to explain away the truth, or put a construction upon it which will bring it into harmony with our preconceived ideas or favourite theories, but honestly and faithfully follow the truth wherever it may lead us. How few are willing to give up place and power for the truth; and fewer still to give up daily bread for it. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Sacrifice position, pay any price,

obtain it at any cost, and when you have secured the precious jewel do not part with it for the world.

Jesus Christ read Holy Scripture in a spirit of *love*, and as Christians we must read the Bible in love and charity with all mankind. In the most painful controversies of the churches there must be love one to another as the distinguishing characteristic of Christians; not false charity, which is unfaithful to Christian truth. "It is better to agree with the truth to conquer opinion, than by agreeing with opinion to conquer truth." The truth must be held in all fidelity. There must be a sincere and profound love of God's law, and at the same time deep love to others. Our fellow-Christians may not see Divine truth from our particular standpoint, and so may entertain somewhat different ideas of it. But we must not indulge hard thoughts and harsh speech toward them on that account—nor indeed toward anyone else, especially toward any who simply differ from us on some minor and non-essential Christian doctrine. Peter said to the Christians of his age: "Be ye sober unto prayer; and, above all things, being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins." What a great multitude of sins love would have covered in past controversies if allowed fairly to operate! We must not read the Bible that we may dispute and argue about it—arguing for victory and not for truth, and wounding the tender sensibilities of good Christians by our unguarded language; but rather that we may act up to the spirit and principle of Jesus Christ Himself. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another"—new in measure

and degree of love—"even as I have loved you." We are now under obligation to love one another as He loved us, deeply, tenderly, thoughtfully, constantly, and when our love is not returned. Sneering at our fellow-Christians who may differ from us on some points does not help the progress of Christian truth or the growth of the Church. It abolishes no difficulties between Christians, solves no perplexing problems, and does not aid the discovery of the beautiful image of truth. The fact is, Christianity cannot breathe freely in an atmosphere of scorn. Abuse of others only irritates opponents and sheds no light on any question under consideration. Surely there is coming on good men in the present age, and will come more and more upon the men of the future, a kindlier feeling, a love like that of the Master, the spirit of the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Let us hope and pray that this will, like a brisk wind or bracing sea-breeze, act upon the health of Christians and help forward the kingdom of God, even amid controversy if we must have it.

People came to Jesus Christ with their *perplexities*, and He explained and harmonised the Holy Scriptures for them. We must come to Him with our perplexities in this age, and He will make some dark passages in our history clearer by the better understanding of His Word. We shall always find difficulties in the Bible. Had all been clear to our finite mind we should have suspected that it was simply human, the measure of man's need, the mere inspiration of his own genius. Christianity goes away toward the infinite, while positivism cuts away the unknown from religion.

Human religions fail where Divine religion impresses and convinces us. While difficulties are found in the Bible they are not of its own creation. It simply reveals the difficulties and records them. The real difficulties are with facts and not with the Bible, which only makes them known. During the night a great flood occurs, and the morning light shows the extent of the mischief it has occasioned but does not make the mischief. A great battle is fought as the sun goes down, and sunrise shows the terrible losses of the general but does not create the losses. So the Bible shows the perplexities in religion, but does not create the perplexing facts. It often explains and settles our difficulties, but does not create or destroy the existing facts which so often puzzle us. We must bring all to Jesus Christ, get into the inner meaning of His teaching, and then much mystery will pass away, as darkness vanishes before the light of the sun.

Jesus Christ deeply influences our *hopes and beliefs in man's immortality.* The immortality of man is assumed in the Bible, not expressly asserted or directly proved, but always supposed and implied—like the existence of God. The Jews rightly concluded they had eternal life revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. "Ye think that in them ye have eternal life." Man longs for immortality as he longs for God Himself, and this longing it is impossible to destroy. The Jews longed for the immortality of the whole man. The belief in religion and immortality go together, they are twin-sisters. The doctrine of immortality is more clearly and fully revealed in the New Testament, and

confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If true to Christ we shall live in a life of freedom from sorrow and suffering; a life of higher intelligence, higher purity, higher joy, higher activity, higher social blessedness, and higher glory, and with all its perfection eternal—spring without autumn, bloom and beauty without decay. But the Jews in too many cases simply thought they had eternal life revealed in the Bible without any consciousness of eternal life begun in the heart on earth. They hoped too commonly for everlasting life solely on the ground of their reading and studying the Scriptures. "He that hath the words of the law," they said, "has eternal life." If they could repeat from memory particular portions of the Divine law to which their attention was specially directed, they deemed themselves certain of heaven. Many in Christendom in the present age imagine that a good knowledge of the Bible, especially if coupled with outward morality, is a guarantee of admission into heaven. Yet the principles of eternal life are not consciously implanted in their souls here and now. "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." John Wesley intimates that to know Jesus Christ by holy, loving faith is both the way to and the very essence of eternal life. It is everlasting life in principle, in bud and beginning, in partial enjoyment, in foretaste as well as in prospect. And heaven itself is only the fuller and more perfected enjoyment of God in Jesus Christ. If there be no heaven here there will be none hereafter.

Jesus Christ is the one way to heaven. He distinctly said:

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." If you really want to know the way to heaven, well, I am the way; living as I live is the way to the great home in the skies. I am the truth about it, and living in the love and practice of the truth as taught by Me will lead you to the many mansions in My Father's house. I am the life, and vital union with Me, having life in Me, leads up to the life of immortality. The Old Testament of which Jesus Christ speaks points to Him as a sacrifice for sin, and it is impossible to understand the types without reference to His death as the foundation of spiritual and eternal life. He is the Author and Giver of such life; a life consisting in enlightened thought, sanctified affections, and beneficent activities. And this wondrous Divine life is for all nations. You cannot understand the sublime and comprehensive language of Old Testament Scripture if you exclude the world's redemption.

If Jesus Christ could refer the Jews of His day to the Holy Scriptures for evidence of His Messiahship, and for guidance in the way to heaven, how much more may Christian teachers request us to examine the Bible which we possess, and which contains not only what the Jews had in our Lord's time, but a perfected revelation of the mind and will of God? The Bible without note or comment may first lead men to Jesus Christ, and then direct them to walk in Him. Truly "all Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good

work." The morning mists have now passed away, and noonday brightness shines upon us in all its splendour. We must walk as children of the light and of the day.

Now what in this age are the general results of Scripture reading? First of all it delivers the community from the manifold miseries of blank *atheism*. Both Testaments teach the being of a God; they do not attempt to prove His existence, but simply state it as a fact recognised by the reason and religious instinct of man. Only "the fool says in his heart, there is no God." It is when man becomes morally degraded that he takes up a position like this. He may be plagued with intellectual doubts, but doubts are commonly moral. However, in Jesus Christ God came down to man, lived among men and showed us God in the flesh, making belief in God simple and intelligible to the common understanding of the people. This is the great theme of Holy Scripture. The Bible is a unique book in this respect. It shows us not only that God is, but what God is. We gather this substantially from the Old Testament. But in the New Testament old ideas are more perfectly unfolded, making God more real to us, and saving us from the moral corruption and destructive irreligiousness of the ancient world. Christianity is the moral salt which keeps the nations from fatal decay. To the influence of Jesus Christ we owe the stability of society.

Intelligent perusal of Holy Scripture commonly saves the people from a subtle *pantheism*. In the Old Testament we see more or less clearly the spirituality, personality, and moral perfection of God. But in the New Testament Jesus

Christ said: "God is a spirit." Not an impersonal being, not simply nature waking up to consciousness in man; but a personal, intelligent, affectionate God—a God with a will to determine and power to act. He is working in and behind nature, yet is distinct from nature, as the workman is distinct from his tools and from the materials on which he works. The teaching of Jesus Christ shows the Fatherhood of God; that God has the intellect and heart of a Father. He loves, pities, protects, guides, governs, and blesses the children of men; does all for His great family which the wisest, strongest, and best of earthly fathers does for his offspring.

True Scripture-reading delivers the people from a miserable *pessimism*. The evils in the community are seen by other religious systems, but they have no effectual remedy to offer. Society is sick unto death, and it wonders what is wrong with it; but apart from Jesus Christ there is no one to tell the people what to do or to heal a diseased civilisation. All our modern speculators are equally helpless. They see the evils which they cannot cure, and think it impossible to cure them; think the existence of the world a mistake, that true joy for the sons of men will for ever be unknown. But reading the Bible as Jesus Christ read His Bible we see there is pardon, peace, purity, hope, joy, and heaven for ever for the Christian believer. Renewed and transformed man attains blessedness which is simply unspeakable and full of glory.

Properly reading Holy Scripture delivers the community from a debasing *materialism*. Jesus Christ confronted and

confounded the Sadducees, who said there was neither resurrection nor angel nor spirit (Luke xx. 28-38). Their materialism was fatalistic; it made sin a necessity and denied moral freedom to man. Yet man is conscious that he is a free agent and not a machine. All material things obey natural law, and the order of nature is universal and complete. But man transgresses or breaks away from the laws of nature. He is free, and knows and feels and rejoices in his freedom; and all commerce, education, government, and the arrangements in society go on the supposition that people are free. Yet this is a materialistic age, and statesmen, philosophers, merchants, and even Christians are in many ways working on materialistic principles. Jesus Christ said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Materialism says: eat and drink and make merry; enjoy this life, for you have no other. The two forces—religion and materialism—have struggled side by side in the world for ages. The light has shone in the darkness even when the darkness comprehended it not. But what Christianity has done for Christendom it will do for the world without the materialistic defects of much modern Christian civilisation.

The intelligent reading of Holy Scripture saves men from gross and refined *idolatry*. God is one, and we must serve and worship no other. That there is no God but God is a great truth in the Old Testament and emphasised in the New. The last word in Revelation chronologically delivered is a caution against this terrible sin: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Dr. Maclaren says: "What does

John mean by idols? Does he mean that barbarous figure of Diana that stood in the great temple, hideous and monstrous? No! he means anything, or any person, that comes into the heart and takes the place that ought to be filled by God, and by Him only. What I prize most, what I trust most utterly, what I should be most forlorn if I lost, what is the working aim of my life and the hunger of my heart, that is my idol."

Thoughtful and discriminating reading of Holy Scripture saves the churches from the bondage of *ceremonialism.* We must worship God in spirit and in truth. The form without the power of Christianity is the world without the sun, the body without the soul, the shell without the kernel, the chaff without the wheat, the man without life and activity. The ritual is no substitute for the personal, transforming, vitalising energy of Christianity. The tendency of modern ritualism in the Anglican Church is toward rationalism; it is creating a mechanical worship, which makes a god of religion instead of making God our religion. This is an awful form of materialising Christianity.

The influence of Jesus Christ has created our *Bible Societies*, which have translated the Holy Scriptures into almost every known language under the sun, and circulated copies of the Bible by millions. It is the Bible that has made the greatness of Christendom; and the Bible is the grand instrument of the regeneration of the human race. Bible-reading has created organisations and societies for the free distribution of copies of the Word of God. From Bible-reading also has sprung pure literature societies,

religious tract societies, Christian knowledge societies, and colportage associations, sending colporteurs through the towns and villages of our country and of other countries, and sending our tract distributors from house to house to spread Christian information among the people. The churches have certainly done something to instruct men in the things of God, but the churches have not yet half recognised the importance, necessity, and usefulness of circulating Christian literature.

CHAPTER IV.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Friendships of the People.

Friendship is a felt need of human nature, felt by high born and low born, by learned and illiterate, by the rich and poor —for we are all made for the companionship of beings who have thought, sympathy, reason, and affection in common with ourselves. Even Jesus Christ felt the need of close and intimate friends. What a dreary wilderness earth would be had we to pass our existence apart from intimate and agreeable friends. Like the poets and philosophers, you may imagine yourselves abandoned to solitude, with no one near who can exchange thought, or look, or speech, or act. Conversation only lives in recollection ; the summer day tells simply of pleasures past, and the winter's evening of joys that were—the brightness and the darkness remind you of happy social gatherings long ago. In depression you are deprived of sympathy ; in exultation you are unable to unbosom your joy. Would life under such conditions be worth living? Would you not rather be prepared to echo the sentiments attributed to Selkirk by Cowper when on

a desolate island in the South Pacific? With singular sensations you would inquire where the charms of solitude were to be found so exquisitely described on the glowing pages of philosophers and poets.

The fact is simply this, human friendship is the necessity of our nature, and approved and appointed by God Himself. Dr. Young calls friendship "the wine of life," and suggests that "angels from friendship gather half their joy." Men on earth may therefore well wish for friends for communion, counsel, and sympathy, and heartily deplore the misery of a desert-like existence. And if such be the value and worth of human friendships, what must be the importance to us of the friendship of Jesus Christ, who created the loftiest ideal of friendship.

By His whole conduct in society Jesus Christ recognised the need of friends. Being human and divine He felt the necessity for personal friends. This shows how really human He was. Much depends on the particular mould in which men are made for craving or dispensing with friendships. The men of iron mould are made to think, resolve, and act alone, and they do not feel solitary in the way and degree that men do who are made in a softer mould. The men who are constitutionally tender-hearted, full of deep sympathy with all life, require the affection of others to brace them for the rough work they are called to do. The men of iron mould can more easily live alone in the wilderness, like John the Baptist, and to them it is no very great trial. But the tender-natured men need all the kindly offices of friendship, need its active love and

sympathy in times of tribulation, its constant watchfulness in seasons of sorrow. Jesus Christ felt He must have the disciples with Him in the garden of Gethsemane, chose the loving John as His bosom friend, and was greatly comforted by the affectionate ministrations of women. Men of independent nature, stern, rugged, iron-like, are made of the tough material which can face the dangers of the battle-field, like Oliver Cromwell or Napoleon Bonaparte; are made to work out reformations, like Martin Luther or John Knox; are made to conduct difficult evangelistic enterprise, like John Wesley or General Booth; are made to face political tempests, like Kossuth and Mazzini. But gentle natures like Jesus Christ, the Apostle John, and the poet Cowper, though wonderfully courageous in the hour of danger when duty has to be done, yet deeply crave sympathy in severe conflict. They would scorn weakly to accept assistance from others, and simply ask affection or to be kindly remembered in prayer. Now, while you admire the iron-like man, you love the gentle man, and select him for your special friend. "The hearts of oak" you lean on in a great crisis, but the tender souls you consult and cling to in your sorrows.

In the world as we find it to-day we require more than human friends, and should distinctly recognise the superiority and necessity of the friendship of Jesus Christ—the need of His grace, guidance, defence, and encouragement to meet and conquer opposing forces. While passing through this world of changing fortunes we may be brought into grave perplexity, if not extreme want. The sun of

prosperity may withdraw its accustomed rays of brightness, and we may be called to pass under many a dark cloud. We may have earthly friends, true-hearted and sincere, but they may be far away. Oceans may roll between us, or continents may separate us from one another. Were they near us and willing to help us it might not be in their power to do so. They might lack the necessary means, opportunities, or the legal authority. But Jesus Christ says: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." With you in sorrow, suffering, painful duty, in all work and service; with you in the infinite resources and ability of My Divine-human nature, dwelling in every country and locality in the fulness of My wisdom, love, and power. The proverb says: "A friend in need is a friend indeed." Jesus Christ is precisely such a Friend.

During our earthly probation we may be placed in peculiar conditions, of which our most intimate and deeply-attached friends are ignorant. We cannot communicate every circumstance to our wisest and dearest friends—and probably what we cannot tell them is the most painful and perplexing to us. Had they any adequate idea of our state they would assist us in our difficulties; but not knowing our critical condition, we suffer without their sympathy and advice. Or they may be perfectly familiar with our case, yet it may baffle the wisest and kindest among them, and they may not know how to help or advise us for fear of doing us serious injury in the attempt to serve us. But it is never so with Jesus Christ. He is never puzzled, or ignorant, or without means and authority to meet peculiar circumstances. His

knowledge takes in our full case, and His wisdom adopts the best method of meeting it. The disciples frankly said: "Now know we that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee; by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." The friends of Jesus Christ may confidently say this still, and trust in the intelligence and wisdom of His friendship.

The union of the two natures in Jesus Christ pre-eminently fitted Him to be the Friend of man. Without the human-Divine nature in one Person He would not have been so peculiarly qualified for friendship. What is it which makes friendship so important and necessary in the history of man? What but our constitutional fitness for it, and the condition in which we are found as members of the community in a world like this? But what resemblance is there or can there be between our friendship and that of Jesus Christ? No doubt in some points it is very peculiar, but at the same time unique and real. Though Jesus Christ is superhuman He is also human; has our human nature, our human experience, our human thoughts and feelings—as well as those which belong to God.

In purely human friendships there are *grateful feelings cultivated and exchanged.* All friendship has its kindly offices, and the performance of these kindly offices produces gratitude. But though we can be grateful to Christ, He cannot have quite the same sort of gratitude toward us, yet something very like it. He takes what we do for His friends as done to Himself. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto

Me." You would have done it to Me if I had been there.

In human friendship there is *equality*—in a sense. Men stand on common ground as friends, though in mind and education and circumstances they may greatly differ; and they readily acknowledge this common equality between them. "Yes," they say, "he is poor, or he is not educated, or he is not a strong-minded man, but he is my true friend." Jesus Christ is "God manifested in the flesh," yet He called Himself the Friend of the disciples, for He was truly man with men. He took man's condition and man's nature; He felt man's necessities and man's friendship, and was like the rich man acknowledging Himself the friend of the poor man. In this Jesus Christ does not sink His Divine nature, but, so to speak, limits Himself.

In human friendships there is often great *similarity of principles, tastes, and sentiments.* Friendships tend to make friends like each other. But Jesus Christ can never become like us in His Divine nature, though we may grow more like Him in character and conduct from day to day. Yet He is like us in His human nature—perfect man while perfect God. He had therefore healthy human tastes and principles, and lived our human friendly life—lived manward while He lived Godward. Hence His capability of friendship.

Intimate human friends are often very *dissimilar in some aspects of character, but they touch and blend in soul and sympathy at some other points of nature.* You sometimes wonder how two men so unlike each other in some things can be so intimate and friendly. But you find the explana-

tion when you see the points of contact in the natures of the two friends made evident in some work, or in some association, or in some peculiar circumstances. Now between Jesus Christ and His disciples there were many points where their natures touched and blended in beautiful sympathy and appreciation. There is a sentiment of admiration between friends. And there was sincere admiration between Jesus Christ and his disciples. They admired Him, and He admired the good that was in them through grace. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." With true, deep, and real love Jesus Christ still loves goodness in good men.

Not only was there moral harmony between Jesus Christ and his friends, but *genuine affection reciprocated.* As heart beats to heart in two human friends, so there was love on the part of Christ toward the disciples and on their part toward Him. It was an ever-growing and strengthening love. They held together free and delightful communion of spirit. Is not this free intercourse of soul with soul an essential element in all true friendship? Jesus Christ freely and familiarly talked with His disciples, and they freely and familiarly talked with Him. This friendship was not a wild fancy, a delightful day-dream, a superstitious feeling, but a blessed yet most wondrous reality.

The friendship of Jesus Christ with His disciples *displays His unequalled compassion.* It is the friendship of the King of Glory for abject man. Were an earthly monarch to manifest intimate friendship with the poorest man in his dominions, it would be universally regarded as a

marvellous act of condescension ; but it would be insignificant compared with the Lord Jesus Christ acknowledging Himself the Friend of simple fishermen. In one aspect it is friendship manifested by a loving monarch toward a once rebellious and disloyal subject. The old rebel is freely and fully forgiven and taken into favour at Court—a wonderful thing for any earthly monarch to do, and only rarely read of in history, but infinitely more wonderful for the King of kings to do. Notwithstanding their previous enmity and frequent unfaithfulness, Jesus Christ took His disciples to His very heart and bosom.

The friendship of Jesus Christ secured for His disciples *the highest privileges and blessings.* They had His sympathy and help in their trials and temptations, with all the advantage of His human experience. The friendship of an angel might be great and beneficial, but an angel has not lived our human life like Jesus Christ. They had the assistance of Christ in the development of their spiritual nature, in the growth and perfecting of their personal Christianity. Being the friends of Jesus Christ they were humbled and exalted ; felt their littleness, but were lifted up with the purest and truest honour in the presence of such friendship. Had they been associated with a friend below them in worth and station they might have become important in their own eyes ; but there was no danger of this in the company of Jesus Christ. His infinite goodness kept them in their proper place. They felt they had everything to learn of Him, and that He had really nothing to learn of them. As the friends of Jesus Christ they were

influenced by zeal for His glory, and cared more for His reputation than for the honour of their dearest earthly friends. They gradually acquired confidence in His care and government, and, though often perplexed, felt all was safe and right in His hands. They were wonderfully elevated in the whole tone of character and life by the friendship of Jesus Christ. It made them better, wiser, stronger men, the makers of history, the conquerors of the world. They got this power by seeing and hearing and knowing Jesus Christ. It is very different reading a sermon when it is published from hearing that sermon delivered. You miss the tones, the looks, the emphasis, the action, and the soul the preacher puts into the words. It was necessary that the disciples should enjoy the fellowship of Jesus Christ that they might fully understand His religious teaching. They saw His face, His eyes; they heard His voice, and His meaning was made clearer by His speech. His fellowship and personal friendship were necessary to the complete understanding of Christianity. By His friendship He put His mind and soul into His disciples. In this way it was that Jesus Christ became the Creator of the creators of His kingdom on earth. He was the maker of the men who made His Church; and it was more wonderful that He should make the men than that they should make the Church. Men make books, make pictures, make machinery, make history, but Jesus Christ was a maker of men; and He so made the men that they were capable of understanding and propagating the gospel which saves the world.

Now if the Church of Jesus Christ is to fulfil its mission in this age it must keep to the spirit and ideal of the Master Himself. The danger is of the members of the Church becoming isolated instead of enjoying the warmth and glow of Christian friendship. In this age life is extremely busy, worldly engagements numerous and pressing, and good men and women find it difficult to get to the means of grace. They are apt to grow cold and hard and lonely. They can scarcely find time to cultivate Christian friendship, with the inevitable result that friends grow fewer, and they find themselves increasingly isolated, and in great danger of going into the world again. Ministers and church officials are very familiar with this state of things and the weakness growing out of it. It is evident that Christians must take deep interest in each other, and freely contribute their share toward the unity and friendship of the church in which they have membership. To do this is simply to tread in the footprints of Jesus Christ, to follow out His teaching, and to catch the spirit and meaning of His example. If Christians elect to remain stiff and solitary, they inflict damage on the fellowship, and therefore on the working power of Christians. All the members of the church must work toward this great end, generating and spreading a friendly spirit among Christians. In London and in the great towns the cultivation of social and spiritual intercourse is an increasing necessity. But everywhere it must be carried out if Christianity is to win the world for Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ did not *spoil His friends with flattery.* He

did not overstate and exaggerate their qualities; He loved His friends too sincerely to be guilty of weak and hollow adulation. The Romans said: "A man's worst enemies are they who praise him." Shakespeare utters pretty much the same idea when he says—

> "My friends praise me and make an
> Ass of me; now my foes tell me plainly
> I am an ass; so that by my foes I
> Profit in the knowledge of myself."

A man is weak who flatters us, and is really our enemy and not our friend; he damages our interests and injures our nature. And he who flatters is capable of maligning when it suits his purpose to do so. Now Jesus Christ was too straightforward and honest to bestow hollow compliments. Empty praise did not come within the limits of His utterances. He was sincere and transparent in speech and act with all His friends. When will the Church as well as the world grow weary of flattery, and come back to the age of strong principle and good sense? To some of us this may seem like the full moon on a clear night, very fine, but a long way off. Christianity will bring it near.

The friendships of Jesus Christ were in a few cases *special*, as with Peter, James, and John; and the chosen twelve were nearer to Him than His other disciples. The law of "elective affinities" may explain a good deal in special friendships. Perhaps churches, schools of philosophy, scientific associations, artistic institutions, the selection of husbands and wives, and the formation of special friendships are based on this law. There are certain points of character,

the peculiar blending of soul and sympathy, which make us feel specially at home with some people; a kind of social electricity circulates between us, notwithstanding great variety of mental and moral constitution. The apostles were very different in idea, mind, temperament, and in general character, but they touched at some point; and though so different in mental and moral character, Jesus Christ selected them as His special friends. And we in this age have friends different from us, but specially touching at some points of nature; and for this reason we are truly friendly with them.

Next to the chosen twelve came the family at Bethany in the special friendship of Jesus Christ. How deeply and truly He must have loved that one family! What a happy home it must have been to Him with the members of the household and His own disciples gathered around Him! Almost all He loved on earth, in special social and spiritual friendship, were gathered under that one roof. But the friendship of Jesus Christ toward this remarkable family did not indulge and weaken them. He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus with a deep but discriminating affection. It was a love in friendship which delayed going to see the two sorrowing sisters when it knew Lazarus was sick, and that an urgent message for sympathy and assistance was received—and that two human hearts were breaking with grief. True love in friendship does not always give what is requested. It sometimes delays to impart its gifts, and sometimes altogether refuses to bestow them. It sees and judges that what is strongly solicited is not for the good of

a friend but injurious, and so it blesses him by direct and absolute denial. In other instances it sees that circumstances and convictions are not ripe for the intended effort, and so it postpones its action till men and things are ready for it. We sometimes wonder that our friends do not act very differently—their conduct is a perfect puzzle to us; but we know their good heart and good sense, and so we wait till we get the explanation before judging them severely. We must act in the same way toward Jesus Christ; and we must absolutely trust His love and wisdom and deep interest in us, even amid all the mysteries of His providential dispensations. Anyhow, we see in the example of Jesus Christ, and of others who were Christlike in their generation, the justification for the selection of special friends. David had his Jonathan, Paul had his Timothy, and Jesus Christ had His John.

The strongest evidence of friendship is a *willingness to sacrifice life.* "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Such love is rarely met with, but is occasionally seen in a shipwreck, or on a battlefield, or when a house is on fire, or when a missionary's life is in danger. Life is the last thing we willingly sacrifice. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Such is our deep-rooted love of life. But the friendship of Jesus Christ supplied an illustration of love stronger than death, and love itself can go no further in friendship. Such love is the finest flower that blooms, the rarest plant that grows, the one remarkable exception to the general rule in friendship itself.

An illustration of *friendship is often seen between brothers.* There is a secret spring of sympathy in a brother's soul which has frequently led him to drain the cup of suffering rather than forsake a brother in adversity. Call this nature, the love of one's kind, or by any other name, it is an indisputable fact in human life. Have you never seen a brother in tears at the news of a brother's calamities? People say he was completely unmanned. The truer philosophy is that the finer manhood was brought out of him. But the warmest glow of feeling has been known to freeze in a brother's breast, and a brother has plotted the death of a brother. In the Old Testament Scriptures there is a charming family; we are melted by the pathos of its story. One son largely shares the father's affection. The gift of a coat of many colours reveals his partiality. The coat, and then the dreams of Joseph told without suspicion, exposed him to the cruelty of his brethren. They sold him into Egyptian slavery. There were many severe struggles of soul before they were able to do this, for a brother's heart feels in spite of him. In this marvellous story you have a striking example of brother forsaking brother. But when Joseph was forsaken of earth he was not forsaken of Heaven. In that dark hour there was a Friend sticking closer than his brothers. That Friend loveth all times, and a brother is born for adversity. To-day He clings closer to us than the brother who has borne with our waywardness, and helped us in our difficulties a thousand times.

Man knows himself in the company of friends, as he never could in solitary life; and Jesus Christ as a Friend is

perhaps best seen in the guest-chamber conversation. The singular words had dropped from His lips: "A little while, and ye behold Me no more." It seemed strange He should leave them just then. It was like a father leaving a large family of helpless children; like a general leaving an army on the eve of battle; like a master leaving a business establishment when an important commercial transaction was impending. There have been many strange partings on earth, but the parting of Jesus Christ from His friends stands alone in human history. The parting of Joseph from his brothers was strange; the parting of Socrates from his disciples was affecting; the parting of many a pioneer missionary from his relations has been sad. But the parting of Jesus Christ from His followers was strangest of all. He had been their intimate Comrade, Guide, Philosopher, and Friend. He had given them unquestionable evidence of His sincere friendship. Still He was leaving them in their weakness to struggle with an infant Church. It was no small trial to those brave men. He saw they were touched to the quick, and mercifully became reticent. When we part from our friends let us speak plainly and kindly to them, putting our best wisdom and best affection into our final interview. We may impress and profit them even though we have hitherto failed to win them for Christ. Last words are often best remembered and most deeply felt.

As the disciples in the guest-chamber pondered their loneliness, Jesus Christ promised them *another Comforter*. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will

not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you." He Himself had wonderfully comforted and strengthened them as His friends; and now He reasons with them in the most impressive and affectionate manner, tenderly assuring them of the absolute necessity of His departure. There is an atmosphere of tender feeling in the whole of the guest-chamber conversation. He feels for them but must leave them. The personal presence of God with His people by His incarnated Son was necessary for the accomplishment of their highest welfare. They must see God and know God in order that they might understand God better. And redemptive work must also be done by Him in our flesh. But fully and finally to effect the supreme welfare of His Church and people required that the Father should withdraw the visible manifestation of Himself in the Son and send us the invisible Spirit. The personal manifestation of God in Jesus Christ was necessary to the revelation and work of the Holy Spirit, as personally present in the Church and among men. Without the revelation of the Father in the Son there could not have been the further revelation of the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. The redemptive work is all of a piece, and hangs together like a splendid edifice.

It was consequently necessary for their personal salvation, and for the work of the world's conversion, that He should no longer remain with them in His bodily presence. However, He did not leave them friendless. He came to them in the plenitude of the Spirit, and abode with them, comforting them against the world's ill-will, and strengthening

them to grapple with the world's infidelity. If we are obliged to withdraw some special influence or effort from our friends, let us try to make what appears to be a great calamity a distinct advance of their highest interests. If possible, let us provide some other and greater comforter for them, who will be a joy to them when we have gone away.

Jesus Christ assured His friends that they might safely *indulge the hope of meeting Him in heaven.* Many have parted on earth with small hope of meeting in heaven. Christians have sometimes lost ungodly relations in the act of sinning. You have gone to sympathise with them, and felt speechless in the attempt. But Jesus Christ could impart comfort to his friends. The hope of reunion in glory was calculated to assuage their temporary grief. It was for this purpose He now distinctly placed it before them, that they might not be overwhelmed with sorrow at His actual departure. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said: "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Trust Me fully as your Redeemer and Friend. "In My Father's house are many mansions." There is a dwelling-place and ample accommodation for all, as well as a sphere of service for each, in the great eternal home. "If it were not so, I would have told you." I would not have gone on so long deceiving you. In this language there is a ring of sincerity and honesty. "I go to prepare a place for you." Where was He going, they wondered? Would they ever see Him again? He was only going to get the place ready, to take possession of it for them, and to hold it till they joined Him. "I will

come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He wished to have His friends with Him—as the general wishes his old veterans who have fought through many a campaign. And can we not in like manner cheer our friends in sorrow or trial, inspire them with hope when they are sinking in despair? May we not brace them for difficult enterprise; give them heart and hope in service? The poorest are helped by sympathy more than by money. And to the good blessedness comes at the close of the struggle, the hope of which is like the nightingale singing in the dark night.

Jesus Christ assures His friends that all they required for themselves, or in their work for Him before they met in glory, they would obtain by *prayer to the Father in His Name.* "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it in My Name." Shakespeare asks, "What's in a name?" and intimates that a rose by any other is just as sweet. If we call a rose a daffodil, the mere change of name does not destroy the fragrance of the rose. Everything depends on what the name stands for. If you can secure the name of an influential gentleman in seeking a situation it counts for much. Some names in a public company or philanthropic organisation secure its success. When Sir John Gladstone, the father of W. E. Gladstone, bought shares in a company it went up five per cent., and when he sold out it went down ten per cent. A letter of recommendation from a friend has opened your way among strangers. The name of an old friend incidentally coming up in conversation among people unknown to you has carried

great influence, and made you at home among them at once. So Jesus Christ told His friends to use the influence of His Name with the Father. He states the ground of the assurance that the Father would regard their prayers presented in His Name. "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God." As they loved Him and believed that He came forth from God on a mission of love, and on their faith and love had risked life and dared the loss of all that was precious to them on earth, the Father saw and appreciated such self-sacrifice. We do not in this age jeopardise life and property for our Divine Friend as the early disciples did. But we have to live a life of self-sacrificing love in another form. And the Father still loves the friends of His Son with approval and joy, which makes Him all the more willing to hear their prayers.

The friendship of Jesus Christ comes out especially in *making known the mind of the Father*. He takes His disciples into His confidence, and reveals to them what He had heard of the Father. "No longer do I call you servants," and for this reason: "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." Bond-servant is too cold and distant a term to be employed in our intercourse now, and would indicate that I treated you with proud indifference. The mere bond-servant is kept in the dark, is ignorant of his lord's intentions, kept at a haughty distance, must not be allowed to know too much, must be taught to keep his proper place and not to take liberties. Whereas

Jesus Christ here acts in the most familiar and endearing way towards His disciples. He is their personal Friend, and they are His friends. Friend is a warmer, closer, stronger term than bond-servant. And the reason why He selects the one and rejects the other is this: "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." They would still be His servants to serve Him; but in a deep and real sense they would be His friends, not perhaps in an absolute but limited meaning. What he had told them in the guest-chamber was evidence of His friendship. He alone could give such information who was with the Father from eternity, and as they advanced in Christian knowledge they gave proof of their friendship with Jesus Christ. But it was necessary that he should remind them that He had chosen them to such exalted friendship, lest they should imagine that their interest in Him and their obedience to Him originated His love to them, just as if there was some merit in their doings. They must do all and then confess themselves unprofitable, and not at all necessary to Him, though He was absolutely necessary to them. He could only regard them as His personal friends as long as they were humble and obedient. "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you."

Perhaps the friendship of Jesus Christ was as much *seen in what He kept back* as in what He revealed to the disciples. He had stated marvellous truths to them, and then intimated that He had many more wonderful revelations to make, but they were not in a state of mind to bear them. He does not, as the Romanists suggest, refer to many un-

written sayings which He gave His disciples after the resurrection; an argument which Romanists employ to give a colourable reason to their questionable traditions. It is most probable that He refers to certain things concerning His passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and especially to the consequences following these remarkable events, namely, the complete passing away of the Jewish economy, the preaching of justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law, the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. As a people the Jews would be scattered over the face of the earth, their city and temple be destroyed, the glory of the Mosaic ritual fade away, the grandeur of their country disappear, and nations and churches unborn would take their place in the future arrangements of God. How could He as their Friend tell them all this at once? It would have broken their hearts and sent them away from His standard. So He kept it from them in part. This is just what we do with our friends. We say things to them which deeply affect them, and go no further, but wait for a suitable opportunity of finishing our statement; and it may be we shall carry some things unspoken to our grave. This is what Jesus Christ did. He gives instruction like the mild entering of a ray of light, or the gentle distilling of the dew on grass and flowers, and will not crush the burdened hearts of His friends. When you send a letter or telegram about some painful subject you do not send it directly to the person mainly concerned, but to a prudent friend, and you are careful to say: "Break it gently to him." You do not wish to crush the man. And Jesus Christ,

knowing the weakness of His disciples, did not wish to crush them under the full revelation of trials which they could not bear just then. What Jesus Christ had already stated utterly confounded them, shook their whole being, confused all their notions of Christianity. In the uttermost perplexity they said, when He spoke of going away: "What is this that He saith, A little while? We cannot tell what He saith." His words were riddles and mysteries to them; and out of pure compassion for their spiritual and intellectual weakness He refrained from saying all to them.

Jesus Christ showed His great friendship for the disciples by *lightly touching their expectations of a temporal kingdom.* They expected a political kingdom; that Messiah would reign in wealth and glory, and win great victories and be a powerful prince over the Jewish race. Their hopes were met in a deeper and better way, though He did not become a political king. At every point and turn they were saying: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They were much like the poor emancipated negroes in the West Indies, who imagined that after being set free they would live like gentlemen and have nothing to do; or like the boy who imagines all his trials and sorrows will vanish when he has grown to manhood and is free from school and the restraint of his parents; or like the son who is entering into business for himself and fancies that wealth will now come flowing into his account; or like all people who live in dreamland and draw upon their fancy for their facts, these disciples thought they were going to be ministers of state, great men, with place and power and patronage to dis-

tribute among their friends and relations. And Jesus Christ had to break the charm, to burst the splendid bubble floating before their imagination. It was hard to tell them straight out that they were mistaken men. He did not wish to discourage them utterly. So He stated some things and left the rest to Providence—the dim outline would be filled in by experience under the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were unprepared to hear much which Jesus Christ wished to tell them as His friends, because *their prejudices were wholly in favour of the Jewish nation and polity.* All know what a hard thing it is to go against the opinions and prejudices of friends. Prejudice in all is hard to kill. Narrow-mindedness and ignorance, of which prejudice is born, are the last things to die in any of us. Toleration only comes of large information and wide experience. God had to work a miracle to teach Peter not to call what He had cleansed common or unclean. This may be taken as a sample of the rest of the disciples. The others like Peter may have concluded that the Gentiles were for ever excluded from the favour of God. Now Jesus Christ had to come into direct collision with their preconceived notions and deeply-rooted prejudices. It was hard and difficult to do this for Him, and for them hard to bear. So He felt He had gone far enough and deep enough in His statement of the case at present. He had not fully disclosed all the facts, or completely stated the future policy of His kingdom on earth, because His friends were not yet educated up to the point of willingness and loyalty in the carrying out of His arrangements. They would understand things

better before long, and then they would gladly obey the instructions of their Divine Friend.

Jesus Christ did not crush His friends with premature knowledge. He prevented too much light falling on their weak spiritual vision, just as the thoughtful, loving mother protects the eyes of her infant when she takes it to the window or out of doors. Jesus Christ had to deal with dull pupils, but they were His friends, and so He watched and waited for opportunities of instructing them. He did not abandon them in anger or despair because they did not understand all He said immediately. He was wonderfully painstaking and kind, and has taught us wisely and patiently to wait for opportunities of spreading knowledge among our friends, and never to abandon our post of duty in despair or impatience. We must rather get large and tolerant views, and not be narrow and petulant and ready to forsake our friends simply because they do not learn the truths of Divine revelation as fast as we wish them. We must bear with our friends as Jesus Christ bore with His friends. He has taught us the grandeur and importance of teaching Divine truth to our friends, and of tenderly dealing with the mind we wish to benefit. And there is just this to give us heart and hope in our work: however obtuse the minds of our friends may be, they are all of them capable of knowing spiritual things. The teaching and training of one immortal soul is a greater work than taking a city or leading an army to victory. If we can only lead one friend to Jesus Christ we shall do a work that will outlive the proudest monument of human genius.

The disciples were only babes in knowledge and grace, and as such He had to deal with them. He must give them revelation by instalments—"as they were able to bear it." He acted on this principle in His public and private ministry, accommodating His instruction to the condition and capacities of His hearers. He has greatly influenced the methods of instruction in this age. When educating a child you do not put it into the highest class to begin with, but into the alphabet, and place the Sixth Standard or the Bible in his hand when able to bear it. When you begin to teach arithmetic to a learner you do not commence with compound interest or vulgar fractions, but simple addition, and go on to the higher branches of arithmetic when the pupil is able to bear it. When you teach grammar to a beginner you do not go to the rules of syntax at first, but to the simple parts of speech, and leave syntax till the pupil can understand it. When you teach music you do not begin with classical pieces but with the notes and scales, and teach the laws of harmony by and by. Now Jesus Christ has always adopted this method with His friends, and He acts on this principle to-day. Men were taught religion by type and symbol in the childhood of the Church. Jesus Christ taught by parables and miracles at the commencement of the Christian Dispensation. He taught our fathers much in the same way, and the more they looked into things the more they saw new and important meanings, but did not see all at once. Luther did not see the full meaning of his first steps in the Protestant Reformation, or he might have hesitated to proceed further. John Wesley and the Early Methodists

did not at first perceive the importance and grand meaning of their work, but by and by the significance of the enterprise rose up in full form before their vision. Had they seen and known all at the beginning Methodism might have never existed or soon died out. Jesus Christ led Luther and Wesley, as He led the apostles, gradually and tenderly at the commencement of their career. It is precisely as He trains men for work to-day, and trains His friends and disciples step by step for the service of heaven. He cannot tell His friends everything on earth, but will tell them all in heaven. What He said to Peter, who wanted to know more than it was convenient to reveal, He says to us as we try to pry into His secret proceedings: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." While in time we must be content with the revelations of time, and not till we get to heaven shall we receive the full revelations of eternity. Jesus Christ, our dearest Friend, does not want to overwhelm us.

Such was the guest-chamber conversation. We may easily imagine we see the disciples gathered round the Master, anxiously listening to His last words before His death. That familiar voice would soon be silent, and those lips closed which had spoken sublime and startling things. The disciples were deeply disappointed men; their trusted Teacher and Friend was leaving them without assuming temporal sovereignty. All seemed over for ever. In shame and disgrace they were to be driven here and there as the scum of society. Had they risked dear life for such terrible failure? They knew much, but Jesus Christ knew all

their rough treatment before their holy martyrdom. He had enough to bear Himself. His own great struggle lay just before Him, and was even now pressing sorely on His soul. But with all the weight of personal sorrow on His mind He felt keenly for His friends. There was a severe struggle going on in the minds of Master and disciples. His feelings prevented His saying many things, and their feelings unfitted them to bear those things. What a scene and what a sequel! When the conversation ended they walked silently to the garden of Gethsemane; and after praying for the disciples as Master never did before or since, He went forth to be betrayed and to die!

Jesus Christ knew what it was to be *betrayed by His special friends.* All the bitterness of betrayal was drained into His cup. Judas, one of the chosen twelve, of the inner circle of His personal friends, stole away from the impressive and affecting meeting in the guest-chamber, went to the chief priests and said: "What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" The priestly party were thankful for the assistance of treachery itself: "And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver"—the price of a common slave. When Judas returned and kissed Him, Jesus Christ did not get into a great passion and storm at him. He simply and quietly said: "Friend, do that for which thou art come." But these quiet words and tones reveal the depth and intensity of the Saviour's grief. Was a more bitter act of desertion perpetrated by Peter? Whatever may be the meaning, Peter is first on all the lists of the apostles. Judas never took the position of Peter among the

disciples. Peter had always been ready to speak for Christ and to defend Him against all His assailants. He had made the loudest confession of fidelity; declared himself "ready to go" not only "to prison" but "to death" in the service of the Master. Others might prove weak and forsake Him in sore trial, but Peter said: "I will never be offended." Peter meant all this in his heart. But Jesus Christ knew Peter's weakness, and said: Yes, Peter, thou art brave and strong, but "the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." Peter got as low in guilt as he well could in the betrayal of his best Friend. That Friend did not deny and betray Peter. Humanly speaking, we should have looked for the fires of wrath to consume Peter; have expected the holy indignation of the deserted Master to destroy him utterly. But no, the cock crew and reminded Peter of his unfaithfulness. And when he properly reflected on his conduct he went out into the darkness and wept bitterly. Grace to effect self-recovery was granted to Peter. His was not deliberate and calculated wickedness like that of the cold-hearted Judas. And so Jesus Christ "turned and looked upon Peter" as His trial proceeded, and His eye caught Peter's eye. He did not say one harsh word, but that kindly, upbraiding look broke the heart of Peter. Here are two instances of serious unfaithfulness in friendship of a totally different type—the one incurably bad and the other not so. But Jesus Christ dealt tenderly with these unfaithful friends, and gave them an opportunity of redeeming their character. Should not we do so with our unfaithful friends, and help them to put

themselves right again? Let us never get into a towering passion with them, or turn sullen and henceforth refuse to have anything to do with them.

The changing conditions of life have made many a Judas of men who never suspected that they were capable of traitorship. None of us are out of danger, and should say with Judas in the guest-chamber: "Lord, is it I?" But, while pitying the weakness of our nature, and casting a veil over some of the darker deeds done in specially trying moments, we would yield no respect to the base spirit which betrays in the act of professing friendship. Did the Psalmist refer to this type of friend? "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my companion, and my familiar friend." Not a chance friend met in the round of visits; not a political, artistic, or commercial friend; but a Christian friend of the most intimate kind. "We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God in the throng." And the fact that we were firm, fast friends for years renders the treachery more painful to endure, especially when two have lived together like David and Ahithophel or Jesus and Judas. Old friends, like old wine, may be best; but if they turn bitter and betray us, we must not turn bitter toward them; we must show a forbearing and forgiving spirit.

Jesus Christ knew what it was to be *utterly forsaken by His friends in His sorest need.* When the bitter end came

to Socrates he had his intimate friends with him to brace his courage. Even Job, who is perhaps the most unfortunate man in history or poetry, had his friends who came "to mourn with him and to comfort him" in his deepest misery. But when the worst came Jesus Christ was left alone. He wished His life to close with His friends around him, and hence His request for their sympathy and watchfulness in the garden just before His arrest and shameful trial. After praying He came to His special friends, and, singular to say, He found them sleeping when he was heart-broken; sleeping, though He particularly requested them to watch with Him, and so to manifest their sympathy and affection; sleeping, though they ought like their Friend to have been praying to the Father for strength to meet the coming conflict. He pensively said to Peter: "What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Especially couldst not thou, Peter, who didst so recently boast of thy constancy and courage? Or could not ye, James and John, who but a few hours ago so readily joined with all My disciples in the strong profession of Peter? Could ye not be mindful of Me in My deepest distress for only a brief space? "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" It was not much I asked at your hands; is that little to be denied Me in the supreme agony of My soul? Am I to be neglected by you just when I specially need your sympathy and care? However, I will not greatly blame you: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." He half apologises for His poor human friends. Does He say that for us when we are sleeping instead of praying and watching?

And do we excuse and apologise for our friends when they are weak and fail us in the supreme hour of earthly trial?

Jesus Christ still carries on His cause by the watchfulness and prayerfulness and loving efforts of His friends. While guarding their characters and their lives they are truly guarding the character and honour and interests of Jesus Christ. While watching and praying with the community they are watching and praying with Jesus Christ; and while neglecting to watch and pray with society they are neglecting to watch and pray with Jesus Christ. When on earth He looked to His friends to take charge of the enterprise of the Cross. He does so now that He is in heaven. His first friends were an insignificant group of young men. He Himself was a young man. What would that group of young disciples do for the world? We know to-day what they did. But will other groups of young men gather round the Cross and be true to the interests of Christianity? We hope, and pray, and believe, that young men in ever-increasing numbers will become the devoted friends of Jesus Christ, whose friendship is the sunshine of life, and the brightest morning is cheerless without it.

CHAPTER V.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Praying of the People.

The first intimation we have in the New Testament of Jesus Christ praying is at His baptism. Holy Scripture is silent about His praying during the first thirty years of His life. During that period His thought and heart would frequently turn to the Father and the great work the Father had given Him to do, and about this work He would no doubt pray. But of this we become absolutely certain as He enters upon His public life, *for the recorded instances are numerous.* St. Luke alone informs us that He was baptized while praying (iii. 21). Dr. David Brown says: "Can there be any doubt about the burden of that prayer? A prayer sent up probably while He was in the water—His blessed head suffused with the baptismal element; a prayer continued likely as He stepped out of the stream, and again stood upon the dry ground. The work before Him, the needed and expected Spirit to rest upon Him for it, and the glory He would put upon the Father that sent Him—would not these fill His breast, and find silent vent in such form

as this: Lo, I come! I delight to do Thy will, O God. Father, glorify Thy name. Show me a token for good. Let the Spirit of the Lord God come upon Me, and I will preach the gospel to the poor, and heal the broken-hearted, and send forth judgment unto victory?" Does not this suggest that personal consecration to any particular form of Christian service, and especially to the Christian ministry, should be made in the spirit of prayer? Should not all Church work be entered upon in the same spirit? We can never reasonably hope to succeed in any religious or philanthropic enterprise unless we ask God's blessing on it. The Master Himself must be imitated in prayer as in every other exercise. Prayer is the life and breath of ministers and church-workers. When Andrew Murray was in England he said he was struck with the great amount of work Christians did on so little prayer. Jesus Christ did not act in that way. And while we work hard and pray little, some of our prayers are more like demands than petitions. We must come to God as beggars for alms and not as workmen for wages.

Jesus Christ often prayed in private. The loneliness of the mount, the solitude of the wilderness, the seclusion of the garden were hallowed retreats where Jesus delighted to pray. On one occasion, after feeding the multitude He sent them away, and "went up into the mountain apart to pray." He had spent a busy, exhausting day among the people, and needed quiet; and so went alone for communion with the Father. We too need retirement for meditation and prayer after a hard day's work in the Church or in the

world. We cannot prosper spiritually without private devotion. In our busiest seasons we must go alone for prayer. We cannot always live even in revival missions, amid the stress and strain of special services. We must go alone to read our Bibles, to meditate, and wait on God. Our strength for service will pass from us, and we shall become weak as other men unless we seek a renewal of our spiritual power by prayer. Personal religion will seriously decline and ultimately die out if we do not keep up communion with God. Piety is a flower which soon withers unless the root be well fed in the secret chamber of devotion. Hard work to secure the bread which perishes, or hard work for the conversion of the people, will not justify the neglect of private prayer.

Again it is said: "And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." He had spent an exhausting day of healing the sick, when sympathy with the suffering took so much out of Him; but, having slept in Peter's house, and renewed the wasted energies of nature, He went forth to other fatiguing public work, yet felt He could not begin it without prayer. So He quietly stole away unobserved in the early morning to a lonely place, where He could pour out His soul to the Father without interruption. We too need physical and spiritual refreshment after busy seasons of religious and secular work; and we require not only rest for the body, but new strength for the soul with which to commence new enterprise; and new power for new duty we obtain by prayer. Like Jesus

Christ, we must pray at the close of one piece of work and at the commencement of another. We shall tire and faint along the hard path of duty without prayer.

It is further said: "He went up into a mountain to pray; and He continued all night in prayer to God." He was intending to commission the apostles, and He prayed all night about it; for this was evidently the burden of His prolonged communion with the Father. He felt that He had now arrived at a crisis in His public ministry, and He was apparently profoundly impressed by it. The sending of the disciples on their great errand was an important forward movement in His work. This deeply affected Him, and led Him to ask the Father's blessing upon it. Should not we too pray long and earnestly before we thrust forth labourers into God's great harvest-field? Perhaps we think too lightly of the appointment of ministers to the home or foreign work; or the appointment of lay missionaries to labour in our towns and villages; or the appointment of Sabbath-school teachers and superintendents; or the appointment of church officers, or other Christian workers; and not being sufficiently impressed by these things, we do not pray for God's blessing upon His work and workers. Jesus Christ did not act like that; He gave a whole night to prayer before He commissioned the apostles. Have we ever prayed all night about our Christian work? Have we ever prayed for a whole hour about it? Andrew Bonar used to pray for two or three hours at a time. Of Edward Payson it was said he never needed to go to a throne of grace, for he was always there. Jesus Christ "spake a

parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint"; and He was Himself the best illustration of His own parable. Mrs. Booth once asked the chairman of a large public meeting of the Salvation Army people, if he, as a Christian of forty years' standing, had ever prayed for a whole hour at a time; and he and all at that meeting had to confess they had not. Have we not to confess so too?

Before Jesus Christ asked the disciples whom the multitude said that He the Son of Man was, and then whom they themselves said that He was, it is stated that He was praying alone. Was He praying that the people, and especially the disciples themselves, might be Divinely guided in their conceptions of His Person, character, and mission; and so be guided in their beliefs and practices? This, to Him, was of supreme importance, since He was the subject of His own teaching and greater than all He taught. If they were not right in their views of Him, they could hardly be right in their conduct toward Him and in their attitude toward Christianity. The student must believe in the tutor, the officer must believe in the general, the subject must believe in the sovereign, or all of them will fail in duty.

Jesus Christ took Peter and James and John alone that He might specially reveal to them apart the glory of His Divine nature, and impress them profoundly with the grandeur of His Godhead. But He did this in a devotional spirit: "and went up into a mountain to pray." While He was upon His knees, the fashion of His countenance was

altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling. The transfiguration occurred while Jesus Christ was engaged in prayer. If we could have quietly stolen beside Him, and reverently listened to His words, should we not have heard solemn and earnest pleading that the Father would glorify His name, and work effectually for the establishment of His kingdom on earth? And should not we be transfigured too if we prayed more, and would not our Christian work also be completely transformed?

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus Christ prayed alone. He wanted the disciples near Him, but He did not want them too near. "Abide ye here, and watch with Me;" and He went forward a little that He might be alone with the Father. We too want our friends with us in any crisis in our history, but we do not want them too near. There are moments, even in our anguish, when we wish to be alone with God; and moments also in our joy and praise when we long to be alone with Him.

Does not this show the great need for private prayer? There are special times calling for special prayer; but, in ordinary times, there must be private devotion or we shall sustain distinct spiritual loss. If Jesus Christ felt the need of going alone for meditation and prayer, we shall find it necessary and profitable. "Come into the desert and rest a while," He said to the disciples. He wanted them to get away for a time out of the worry and bustle of life, away from the perpetual excitement, for quiet thought and spiritual communion. It is more needful in this age than in our Lord's day. These are times of hot competition and

fast living; and for us it is a distinct advantage to be alone with God, free from business, from company, from all worldly engagements, to be shut in with God, and men and things shut out. Young men and women in many business houses in London and great cities have no private room for meditation and devotion. They are never alone, night or day, for months together, and they can only live apart from others in mind by a great effort of mental abstraction. In the country villages and small towns it is not so difficult, and those who have no secret chamber of devotion can go alone into the woods and fields and lanes for private prayer. A young man in London said to me: "I have my private prayer when I am going into the city in a morning between five and six, as I am most alone then." Some good people hold communion with God during their country walks—and, as their intercourse grows sweeter, they extend their walks; and prayer is communion with God as well as asking favours at His hands. Whatever our secret chamber of devotion—whether field, or street, or private room—it is wise to select the most leisurely time for our principal devotion during the day, and on special occasions to remain long in prayer, perhaps repeatedly urging the same petitions, as Jesus Christ did.

When the disciples knew that the Master prayed so much, do we wonder that they should say to Him, Teach us how to pray, as John taught his disciples? He then gave them the great model prayer, beginning: "Our Father who art in heaven." His great idea was the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of men. This, above all, He wanted mankind

to realise. In prayer, they were not to forget their relation to God and to one another. They must pray to their Father who sees and dwells in secret; and while awed and impressed by the fact of His omniscience and omnipresence, they were encouraged to approach Him with freedom and confidence because He was truly their Father. Now we shall make very little out in life unless we persevere in prayer; it will, more than all else, determine our character, and open or close the door of usefulness and happiness. "Declensions in piety," says Matthew Henry, "begin at the closet door." Prayer and goodness are inseparably linked together, like cause and effect.

Jesus Christ prayed in public as well as in private. When teaching the multitude, even before His discourse was concluded, He said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight." In St. Luke, where the same language is employed, it is said that Jesus "rejoiced" or exulted "in the Holy Spirit." He not only assented to the arrangement of the Father, but fully and adoringly acquiesced in it, felt supreme satisfaction in God's method of procedure. It was not for the clever simply to speculate about Christianity, but to submit as sinners to God's gracious authority. Hence the simple and humble entered the kingdom of God first. At the grave of Lazarus, "Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the multitude

which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me." It is thought very probable that Jesus Christ here refers to His prayer at the time of receiving information of the sickness of His friend Lazarus. And this shows us His living and affectionate unity with the Father, the outgoing of His heart to the Father in love and faith and prayer, as the events successively arose; and He now prays, "not for what He wanted, but for the manifestation of what He had," that the people might see that He always acted in harmony with the will of the Father, and was truly the Son of God. When teaching the inquiring Greeks, Jesus Christ prayed: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." The prospect of His suffering deeply affected Him. His human nature would have shrunk from the Cross; but He shrank still more from opposing the will of the Father. Prayer in all of us is very largely submission to the will of God. "If we ask anything according to His will He heareth us." This is the everlasting condition of real and successful prayer. Now, if Jesus Christ prayed in the temple and the synagogue, prayed before the multitude, prayed in the company of the disciples, should not we pray in public too? Pray in the family, pray in the Church, but never be afraid or ashamed of praying in larger society or in the presence of the multitude. If people heard us pray more, they would be more impressed.

Evidently *constant communion with the Father* was in

some deep and mysterious way a daily necessity to Jesus Christ. And prayer is a constant necessity in our case as His disciples. To pray is to bring man's thoughts into harmony with God's thoughts; to look at the events of life as of Divine arrangement; to submit ideas, inclinations, and purposes to God; to have a sense of His presence and power in joy and grief. What we are as the disciples, the imitators of Jesus Christ, we are by prayer. All goodness of character, triumph over temptation, self-restraint, pure desires, and beneficent activities, we unhesitatingly ascribe to the efficacy of prayer. To say that a man is a sincere Christian is simply to say that he truly prays. Prayer lifts the human mind to the highest state of thought and feeling; higher than the imagination of the poet, the genius of the philosopher, the deductions of the scientist. Communion with God in prayer leads the mind to dwell on the wisdom, power, knowledge, presence, holiness, justice, goodness, and faithfulness of God. The whole faculties of the soul are called into exercise by prayer,—faith, hope, love, reverence, submission, patience,—and these faculties are trained and developed for service. So Jesus Christ had strong reason for teaching His disciples to pray, and setting them the blessed example; though He was not Himself dependent in the sense we are, nor did He require the training which we need. The necessity for prayer in His case existed in some deeper and grander way at present beyond our comprehension.

There was a *peculiar relation existing between Jesus Christ and the Father*, which made prayer right and

reasonable. He was of the Father by eternal generation; was officially sent by the Father to save the race; and He and the Father were not only one in essence but also in redemptive work. And so He felt He must keep up communion with the Father, though we may never fully understand the reason and nature of it. And is not prayer in our case a right and reasonable exercise? Do not outward relation and inward feeling render it so? Man is dependent on God, and his sense of dependence leads him to pray. Pride of heart, of intellect, of position, and a natural resistance to virtue in the fallen soul would keep him from prayer. Hence in the religion of nature and in the non-Christian religions of the world we find no regularity in the exercise of prayer. Besides, a youth brought up in a Christian home says his prayers by mere force of habit. When he leaves home and gets clean away from the oversight and restraint of Christian parents, and mixes with ungodly companions, he sometimes begins to think prayer arises from ignorance, prejudice, narrow-mindedness; so he leaves off his devotions till deep feeling brings him to his knees again. Is not this the history and experience of many a young man brought up in a Christian household? It was this deep feeling which led Joseph Barker, the converted infidel, to pray in the woods of America, in the darkest days of his scepticism. There was no new light flashing across his mind, no special process of reasoning at the time; nothing but inward misery, a painfully felt want of God. At first he began to pray involuntarily, and then continued by deliberate choice.

It is perfectly clear that prayer has its foundations deep down in our moral nature and in the claims of God. Our best feelings, our felt sin, our felt weakness, our felt obligations to God, and our sense of God's favours prompt us to pray. Prayer is the fitting and reasonable expression of the deepest, truest, highest, and strongest feelings of our nature; and nothing but cherished sin or speculative scepticism will restrain prayer before God. A pure, believing Christian soul feels it must either pray or die.

Are you at all puzzled by the fact that Jesus Christ prayed? When you come to look at it in the light of reason and revelation, it surely cannot be surprising that He should pray to the Father. You are helped in your conception of it by human experience and observation. The affectionate and dutiful son at school or college delights to keep up a constant correspondence with his father at home. He asks his father's advice, requests necessary supplies, wants to know all the family incidents, desires in all things to please his father, and always to bring joy to the household. He has great pleasure in constant and familiar interchange of ideas and sentiments, and would almost suffer anything rather than have the correspondence with his father interrupted. The profit of the intercourse is too great and too pleasing to be sacrificed. The father loves the son and the son loves the father. The son thinks there was never such a father, and the father thinks there was never such a son; they are one together. And in like manner the Son of God while on earth cultivated constant intercourse with His Father in heaven. He had real

delight in the intercourse. He had not only pleasure, but in some deep and mysterious way unspeakable advantage in the intercourse. And so we must pray from a sense of duty and for the profit of communion with God.

When we look at Jesus Christ praying and teaching others to pray, we naturally ask ourselves: *What is prayer in itself, and what is the efficacy of prayer?* That is to say, does prayer influence God, or does it simply influence us? Does it influence the outward universe, or does it influence our inward being only? To these perplexing questions there comes one simple answer, though we may puzzle ourselves infinitely over them. Prayer influences both God and ourselves. We may waste our life in speculations on prayer, as we may on a thousand other things, and we shall probably get no truer solution than that prayer acts both on God and ourselves. In its nature prayer is the sincere desire of the heart, mentally or verbally spoken to God; or it is asking from Him things "agreeable to His will," which we need and He has power to give. It is the heart's desire, whether lisped by a little child or unuttered by a philosopher. As to its efficacy, it is power with God. This is the Old Testament definition. And our encouragement to pray is that we feel best, live best, and work best when we pray most. This is a valuable Christian experience, which is worth a good deal to us in these days of doubt. The troubled waters of religious life are calmed, and peace and strength come by prayer.

As we gaze upon Jesus Christ at prayer, or giving instruction on the subject to the disciples, we ask: ***Is***

prayer a sacred duty or merely a glorious privilege? The old answer comes — it is both. We are bound to acknowledge God's marvellous goodness in providence and grace, and have no right to expect His spiritual favours unless we ask for them. Prayer is made binding upon us in the New Testament and by reason, and is enforced by the example of Jesus Christ. For good and honest Christian living do we really need anything more than this? Practically, what does it matter to us whether prayer be a duty or simple privilege? Is it not enough to know that Jesus Christ taught us to pray, and confirmed His instruction by His example? If prayer be considered a mere privilege, we may decline a privilege. We may not think the privilege worth accepting; may deem it too troublesome or expensive. But some privileges are so valuable that it becomes a duty to accept them. Prayer is such a privilege, and so it becomes a duty to pray.

We ask, further, as we see Jesus Christ at prayer and teaching others to pray: *Can God answer prayer in a way worthy of His character and government, and at the same time in a manner suitable to our circumstances?* Did not God do so in the case of Jesus Christ? And if in the case of Christ, why not in our own? Surely He can arrange His system of agencies so as to answer our prayers, just as an earthly father can arrange his affairs so as to meet the wishes and necessities of his child. A father is moved by the earnest request of his child; that child's prayer leads him to arrange matters to meet the request of his son. So as an earthly father pities and blesses his children, the great

Father in heaven pities and blesses those who fear and serve Him. We do not see that there is any more difficulty in the one case than in the other. God our heavenly Father no more gives up His will, judgment, and authority in making His arrangements to bless us, than the earthly father gives up his will, judgment, and authority in making his arrangements to bless his children. Besides, God can answer prayer just as easily as He can inflict punishment on offenders, or convey providential blessings to the obedient. If He can govern in nature, and give blessing or inflict curse, why cannot He do a similar thing under the government of grace? Christians should guard against the mere schoolboy puzzles which are neither clever nor profitable, but amusing or vexing till you discover the trick.

Let us settle it with ourselves that *prayer is an absolute necessity*, and that nothing can serve as a substitute for personal prayer—neither wisdom, nor intelligence, nor strength of will, nor force of character, nor the greatest talents, nor the greatest scholarship, nor the most splendid genius, nor the highest accomplishments, nor the most favourable circumstances in which we can be placed; for all these fail in the day of severe temptation. Mere human prudence and human resolutions give way in the moral battles that all Christians have to fight on earth. We need grace from God to gain victories over sin, and this grace we obtain by earnest and believing prayer. If we have not it is simply because we ask not, or because in some way we ask amiss, except sometimes God may postpone the answer to our prayers to accomplish some wise end of His own.

If there be busy days when we cannot go alone to pray, let us lift our hearts to God all the more in mental prayer, when we can for a moment or two disengage our minds from business, even though we cannot free our hands from it.

Jesus Christ prayed in *complete submission to the will of the Father.* "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He repeatedly urged that this cup of extreme suffering might pass from His sacred lips, only if the Father saw fit to spare Him the terrible agony. This is an impressive fact we should not fail to remember. And is not this our justification for repeatedly pressing our petitions on the Father? especially when any great trial is looming in the distance or any oppressive duty is appointed us. He knows our frail human nature, and makes far more allowance for our physical and mental infirmities than our best friends. Our lack of courage, peculiar fears, nervous shrinking from torture—are all known to Him. He may not altogether excuse our yielding to weakness, but He understands the case, and is not, like some good people, hard and unfeeling toward us. If He does not see fit to remove the painful trial or hard duty, like Jesus Christ we must face the suffering, or go and fill the difficult post of duty. This submission to the will of God is an essential element of true prayer. Some people speak of prayer as if it were a charm to be used when we wish God to indulge us. Scientists propose material tests, as if prayer were a part of physical science. If we truly pray it is deliberately and

intelligently preferring that God should decide what is for our good and His glory, distinctly recognising Him as a wise and loving Father who never spoils His children. Those scientists who propose to try the efficacy of prayer as they test the efficacy of medicine have a complete misconception of the nature and conditions of prayer. Prayer always means asking in absolute submission to God's will. But prayer supposes the action of God on the human mind and the employment of means; that God can suggest ideas to medical men, nurses, friends, and that all necessary effort must be made. It would be as reasonable for scientists to propose to cure consumption by metaphysics, to set a broken arm by philosophy, or to cure fever by arithmetic, as to propose to cure the sick by prayer without the means and resources of medical science. But when we have done all in our power and failed, we must bow to the will of God. Jesus Christ did not escape the cup, but got power to drink it.

Does prayer simply mean that we are to get our own way? If so, then we are the masters of God and He is no longer our Superior. On this theory, by simple prayer we can force God to give us all we want and when we want it. This would be very much like the heathen, whose idea of their god is that when they pray for rain he must give them rain; and if rain does not come they drag forth their god into the field or plain to show him the wretched state of things. This is an attempt to force their god to do what the heathen worshippers desire. It is said that we Christians pray for rain in much the same way and spirit; that prayers

are frequently contradictory, as in the case of two farmers who pray, one for fine weather and the other for showers; and that in many instances, when rain is needed by everybody, and all are united in praying for it, rain does not come; so the Christian's God is not much better than the god of the heathen. All this turns our thought to the nature of true prayer, which is taking our place at His feet, and saying with Jesus Christ: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." In all prayer which is true and real we seem to master God, but in reality God masters us. Prayer should not be a bargain for success, a pleading with God to gratify us, an engagement with Providence that we shall be promoted to honour, and place, and power, in this life; but the expression of willingness to take defeat like many better men than we are. James Smetham, the brilliant letter-writer, says: "I want not fame but life, the soul's calm sunshine—life in the eye of God." And if worldly defeat secure this better than worldly success we should pray that God may defeat us. Anyhow, when we pray we must put forth effort to answer our own prayers. We are apt to make prayer the substitute for proper effort and not the inspiration of effort; to ask, in fact, that God would make work easy for us or unnecessary by granting grace or doing the work for us. Mackay of Uganda says: "Prayer without labour is sloth." We must constantly help ourselves in the Christian life, use with all fidelity and diligence the gifts and graces God bestows. Our great encouragement to pray is not only that Jesus Christ prayed, but that He still prays, and prays for us. "I would rather," said James

Smetham, "have Christ, with His knowledge of all things, than St. Peter and all the saints and angels pleading for me." Prayer lifts us nearer to Jesus Christ in thought, sympathy, and character. It is this Christlikeness which is the most precious result of prayer. As our shores are washed by the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, making the air more genial, so prayer modifies the atmosphere of a cold, unspiritual world, giving us religious warmth and health.

Scientists sometimes tell us that we need not pray because *the world is governed by fixed laws*, and that uniform law will take its course irrespective of Christian petitions. They appear to forget that men are continually manipulating the laws of nature or guiding them; that is to say, employing one law of nature to counteract another law of nature. The man who ascends in a balloon counteracts the law of gravitation. The medical man who cures the sick person by the law of chemistry counteracts the law of disease. The engine driver who turns off the steam and puts on all the break-power to prevent a collision counteracts the law of force. The man who carries a piece of marble to the top of the hill to beautify his mansion does this by adapting the laws of nature to his purpose. Now do scientific gentlemen mean seriously to tell us men can manipulate the laws but God cannot? Surely God is not mastered by His own laws, and unable to use them for the chastisement of the lawless, or the blessing of His obedient children. Are God's hands tied by His own laws? That would be not only fixed laws, but, as Thomas Cooper used to put it, "God Himself in a fix." We do not suggest that this is a

complete answer to the scientists, but that there are many points to look at, and materialistic science takes no account of the great spiritual Agent working law. The true view is that law is so arranged that it works out our highest good, not always apparently for the narrow present and the gratification of our selfish desires, but for the wide interests of our whole being.

The objects for which Jesus Christ prayed were numerous. St. John records the High-Priestly prayer — the simplest, sublimest, and most comprehensive prayer in literature. It is the outpouring of His soul within arm's reach of the bitter Cross, which already cast its shadow over His path. *He first prays for Himself.* "Father, glorify Thy Son." In this instance He does not say "our" Father, but Father; and it is as if He had said: Father, sustain and honour Me amid the suffering through which I am about to pass. Let it be evident to all that I am indeed the Son of God. With this ultimate purpose put dignity upon Me, "that the Son may glorify Thee," by becoming obedient unto the death of the Cross; and so becoming a channel of grace to the whole human race, whereby believers in Me may bring glory and honour to Thy name to the end of the ages. Spiritual and eternal life come through faith in the Son, and to know Him by personal experience is indeed to live truly. All this has been arranged by the Father for the good of mankind and the glory of His name, and so the Son simply requested the glory He possessed from eternity, and asked for the restoration of this glory because the end of His incarnation was accomplished, and He was going to conduct all

mediatorial affairs at the Father's right hand. He therefore asks that the glory which was shrouded by the incarnation might no longer be concealed from view. Now we too must first pray for ourselves as Jesus Christ prayed first for Himself. We cannot help others unless we first obtain help for ourselves. There is a great danger of neglecting our personal spiritual interests in our earnest and prolonged efforts to save others. This is a real danger to ministers and church-workers. So far as we are able to judge, some Christian workers die prematurely in soul, if not in body. The flower of their piety is never developed into its fullest beauty and usefulness. The highest fruitfulness is lost because they have lost the spirit of prayer. Or they become like trees without fruit, wells without water, clouds without rain.

Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples, prayed for their preservation and guidance. "I pray for them . . . for them whom Thou hast given Me." In this case I make special request for My disciples. I am deeply concerned for their safety. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me." Keep them from being injuriously affected by the evil atmosphere in the world about them; keep them through Thy gracious name revealed in Thy Word. I kept them from falling away from the truth, from going back again into the world; when they staggered at times I held them firmly by My hand, and saved them from backsliding altogether—excepting the son of perdition, who was self-doomed and had in him the elements which make a hell anywhere in the universe. Now as Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples, should not

ministers pray for their converts and for their congregations? should not Sunday-school teachers pray for their scholars, professors pray for their students? In these days of error and evil, instruction and training are essential, but the great instrument of power is prayer. If all else be attended to and prayer neglected we must calculate on failure.

Jesus Christ prayed for all Christian believers of every age and nation. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word." It is deeply interesting to learn how Jesus Christ prayed for those who believed on Him and followed Him in the days of His flesh. But He also prayed for all who should believe in Him through the gospel read and expounded in after ages. He looked forward through the coming centuries, and had present to His mind all Christian believers everywhere and in every age, and He prayed for them all with the satisfaction and joy of a Saviour. He saw the great multitude yet to be gathered into the Christian Church from every land and in every succeeding age. The present and the future became one glorious vision to Him at that moment; and He prayed for the whole body of believers throughout the world as if they had been distinctly mentioned by name. Now if Jesus Christ prayed for unborn Christians, may not we? John Hunt, the Figian missionary, apparently catching the spirit and thought of the Master, used to speak of being impressed with the importance of praying for friends and relations of the third and fourth generation. May we not carry it a great deal further, and pray for all generations of Christian believers?

Jesus Christ likewise prayed for the *unity of all Christian believers.* "That they may all be one." As they had oneness of life in and from Him He wished them to be one in their doctrinal belief and teaching as to the essentials of Christianity; one in purpose and effort for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of the nations; one in mutual love and esteem, loving one another truly and fervently. This oneness in Christ Jesus is the true unity of the Christian Church, and will ever bind God's people together as "one flock" under "one Shepherd," notwithstanding denominational differences. The motto of the churches must be: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." It was not external and formal unity for which Jesus Christ prayed, the unity in name and outward acts. There must be the graces and fruits of Christianity; the recognition that Christ alone is the Author and Giver of salvation. And then little external differences will rather emphasise the grand fact that Christians are one at heart and one in Christ Jesus the Lord. Yet the unity of believers must somehow be visible to the world, that the sight of it may win doubters to the Christian faith, and lead the nations to accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah. This is done by allowing people to differ from us, yet all exhibiting the Christian spirit while holding different opinions on church polity and on minor and non-essential points of Christianity. The family is one, though there are man and wife, and many sons and daughters; the army is one, though there are many regiments; the navy is one, though there are many ships of war; the company is one,

though there are several partners in the firm; and so the Church of God is one, though there are many denominations. And it is open to doubt if the churches would gain if all denominationalism were dead and buried. It does certainly seem to be a great waste of time, and energy, and means that there should be in some small village three feeble churches when one church would accommodate all the members. But everything depends on how the unity of the churches is carried out. If in one church there be one hundred members, and in another two hundred members, and in the third two hundred and fifty, and by union you can only unite four hundred, you distinctly lose by the union; but if you unite the five hundred and fifty it is a great gain. What is principally needed is larger ideas, larger sympathy, larger life, and not a cast-iron uniformity in system and practice.

Jesus Christ prayed that His disciples might be *eternally glorified*. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." Here the prayer rises above simple request to the "I will" of the Lord of Life and Glory. What a magnificent prospect is this, for all Christians to be gathered together at last in one great home in the skies, with the Master in the midst of them; and when so gathered together to gaze on the glory of the Lord and Head of regenerated and glorified humanity. It is as if Jesus Christ had said: This is the reward I claim for My followers; and to be with Me and to gaze upon My glory will be honour and blessing enough.

Jesus Christ prayed to *the close of His life.* He not only prayed for Himself and His followers but for His enemies, as He hung on the Cross. They were not ordinary enemies; still He prayed for them: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He asked pardon for His very murderers, and pleaded their ignorance as some mitigation of their crime. Did not this dying prayer influence the dying prayer of Stephen? "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Has it not influenced the prayers of martyrs and confessors ever since? Will it not influence the prayers of good men in all the future? Should it not influence our prayers in this age? Are not many sins against the Church and against Christians very often sins of ignorance? They too know not what they do. Should we not forgive them, pity them, pray for them? "Pray for them that persecute you," as taught by Jesus Christ by language and by example. Heart-broken, in extreme pain, dying, He asks mercy on His enemies; and then meekly closes a life of prayer with a last memorable prayer: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost."

How wealthy we are now with the instruction and prayers of Jesus Christ! How much poorer the Christian Church would have been without the tender, beautiful, comprehensive prayers of the Saviour recorded in the four Gospels! How we should have wondered, speculated, and been baffled in thought on the subjects and objects of His prayers! But now some things at least are clear and helpful to us on our Christian pilgrimage; and they will probably be a

comfort to us when we come to die. We see that Christianity is not merely a system of doctrines, but a personal force, which is full of purity, love, goodness, mercy, patience, humility, and prayer; and this personal force will yet fill the world with the spirit of prayer, and so fill it with Christian goodness.

CHAPTER VI.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Aims of the People.

Life is manifold, marvellous, magnificent, and has in it a wonderful Divine purpose. All life is a splendid Divine gift, but all life is not equally noble or brilliant. As one star differs from another star in magnitude and brightness, so it is with life in its manifold forms of glory and use. Plant life is truly marvellous, but the plant does not think. Insect life is also wonderful, and here we get into the region of mind. Animal life is higher and more glorious still, but it is far below the moral and rational life of man. Human life is not only intellectual but spiritual, and, according to the New Testament, it is redeemed and immortal. Now this rational, moral, redeemed life may be regenerated, transformed, consecrated, and finally glorified. It may be fully devoted to Divine uses now and for ever. Man may live a generous, honest, fearless, faithful, reverent, pure, loving, happy Christian life in a world like this. He may answer the purpose of His creation and redemption, spread the honour of Jesus Christ, and make the world better and

sweeter to live in; or he may prostitute life, curse society, and make earth more like hell. It is for man to determine what his life shall be.

The supreme aim of life for many men is *the acquisition of wealth*. And when a man has fully made up his mind to become rich he may sooner or later accomplish his purpose. There are many things more difficult than to make money. Some men make and lose two or three fortunes in one brief lifetime. Many men begin with comparatively little, or with nothing at all, and secure a competence by the age of fifty or sixty, and then retire to enjoy their hard-earned means. This shows that wealth may be got if men are determined to live for money-making and go the right way about it. That is to say: if they hush their conscience; if willing to take advantage of the ignorance or necessities of others; if prepared to run competitors off the road and ruin persons of smaller means; if not content with fair success in their own locality and fishing in their own waters, they go forth greedily to fish in the waters of other people, and take business out of their hands—they may often accumulate a considerable fortune in the end.

Let it be distinctly understood that wealth fairly and honourably got is not an evil but a good thing. It is not the possession of wealth, but the perversion and selfish enjoyment of it which is the curse of mankind. Not money but the love of it is the root of so much social evil; loving it so as to make a god of it, prostrating mind and heart in debasing mammon-worship, this puts the aim of life wrong, and so puts the whole life wrong in principle and practice.

Take the case of a man who has made up his mind to become rich. Generally it is put in a more plausible way. A man says: "I am determined to get on; I have fully made up my mind to succeed." This at least is the worldly way of putting the thing. The Christian way of presenting the commercial enterprise of life is this: "If the Lord will, we shall both live and do this or that." God's will is taken into account by the Christian, which is the reverse of the Christless policy of the mere man of the world. The secularists say: "To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain." As much as to say, we mean to make money, to build a good fortune, to grow rich, to become merchant princes, to live for the success and prosperity of secular life. The worldly way is to get on any way that is practical, but by all means possible to get on. The Christian way is to deserve success, whether success be granted or not. The man of the world says: I will do the thing I set before me, and is governed by his own will. The Christian says: If God smiles upon my business enterprise I will do the thing I propose to myself, and is governed by the will of God. The policy of the one springs from the greed of gain; the policy of the other from a wish to answer the true end of existence.

Now take this worldly model man of business, who says he has thoroughly made up his mind to get on in life. He rises early, sits up late, eats the bread of carefulness; studies the money articles in the newspapers; buys in the cheapest market and sells in the dearest; advertises extensively, seeks orders, calculates the needs of the locality, and adapts himself

to the times. From Monday morning till Saturday night he pushes on with a strong determination to succeed in business. One week, one month, one year is very much like another, decade after decade. He keeps his men up to the mark in every department, goes on at express speed, occasionally makes a lucky venture and reaps a good commercial harvest. In the end he probably accumulates a great or moderate fortune, and retires from the struggle pretty well contented with his success.

Well, what has the man got? So much materialism. What does he do with it? He lives a selfish, material existence. He turned himself voluntarily into a mere money-making machine. As he sowed he reaps. He is a mere splendid piece of animalism; a spectacle to gods and men.

It was precisely so with the rich man in the parable. How hard he worked for his wealth the parable does not state. But when his land brought forth abundantly, instead of making a generous and righteous use of his wealth he hoarded it, determined to accumulate and not to distribute wealth. He became not a great and noble soul, a benefactor of the poor, or a creator of other successful business men, but what Dr. Parker very fittingly calls "a great barn builder"—not a very great greatness after all; for there is nothing remarkably great in the enlargement of his store-houses instead of the enlargement of his ideas and heart. He simply said to himself: Now I have abundance, much goods laid up for many years; I need not fear want, I can well afford to live in ease and enjoyment, to be very generous

to myself: "Soul, take thine ease!" Just as if an immortal soul could live on material things, or as if any amount of material prosperity could feed a soul which by its very nature hungers for spiritual good, and can only find supreme satisfaction in Jesus Christ.

Take the case of a Christian who yields to the temptation to become rich. It is the old story—gaining the world and losing himself, forfeiting the life of God in the soul and obtaining in the place of it the prosperous, degrading life of the world—a pitiable and poor exchange. "They that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition." These are strong words, but they are true. The man has got on, as people say; he has got houses, lands, material enjoyments, position, respectability, got what the world deems great and good. He has now made his mark, and is somebody in the community—is a man of property.

But what has the struggle cost him? A man may pay too dearly for success. He used to read his Bible with pleasure and profit, but now he almost or altogether neglects it. Formerly he went alone at stated times for quiet devotion, but now he has little or no heart for private prayer. He used to attend the public worship of God with delight and regularity, but now is seldom in the house of God, and if occasionally present has little joy under the ministry of the word. In the past he showed zeal and courage in Christian and philanthropic work, but now he is given up to the luxuries and pleasures of life. He has struggled long and hard for his possessions, and will hence-

forth spend his days in their enjoyment. He has secured what he aimed at, and it has eaten the good out of his heart that was once in it.

I have not been drawing a purely imaginary picture, but could produce men by the score whose career I have accurately sketched. They did not mean to be as poor as some good men they knew. So they got wealth, and lost their Christian goodness of heart and life. Perhaps they never meant this at the commencement of their commercial career. But this was the net result. They would save their life, and they lost it. A man may lose a fortune and make another. What when he loses himself?

In multitudes of instances the same principle is operating in other forms. Men are determined to secure the good things of earth. Money represents these things, and they mean in some way to get it and to keep it. Whether the story about John Wesley and the Quaker be true or not, it correctly represents the spirit of this materialistic age. Wesley says: Get all you can, save all you can, give all you can. The Quaker is said to have pronounced the first two points excellent, but declared that the third spoiled them. This strikes me as a libel on the Society of Friends, who are generous toward the poor and hard workers for the people. John Bright, who was one of them, says: "I do not believe we are placed on this island, and on this earth, that one may be great and wealthy, and revel in every profuse indulgence, and five, six, nine, or ten men shall suffer the abject misery which we see so commonly in the world."

Now Jesus Christ wonderfully *elevates the aims of life as to the acquisition and use of wealth.* He taught us that it is infinitely "more blessed to give than to receive." Everybody believes in the blessedness of receiving, but few in the greater blessedness of giving. The true commercial spirit is to make money for God; not to found a family, to enjoy luxuries, to be generous to ourselves and stingy toward philanthropy, or to be liberal with money when we have no further use for it at death. Is our money our master or our servant? The difference here is the difference between right and wrong, religion and irreligion. Money is a good servant but a bad master. We must give on the principle of receiving from the hand of God; must look at what we have and how we got it. "Freely ye have received, freely give." This law should regulate the whole pursuit and aim of life, making life one of self-sacrificing love. We must give thought, sympathy, effort, influence, and material assistance—must give all we have to give for God and man. Give the Bible, pure literature, pure art, medical help, the advantages of science, and all the blessings of Christian civilisation. He gives material wealth to some that they may intelligently and conscientiously use it for Him; He gives intellectual and spiritual wealth to others that they may serve society in another way. But He absolutely forbids men to monopolise their wealth of soul or circumstances.

What we need in the world to-day is the spirit of Jesus Christ; the spirit that makes men rather than money, or that only makes money to help in making men. The man

who is trying to get all he can and to give as little as he can has not the spirit of Jesus Christ, but a mean, stingy spirit—and while he gives he looks as if he were sitting in the dentist's chair. We must give, feeling and looking as if giving were a true pleasure and really did us good. Men say a man who has not made a fortune is a failure in life, and that he who has made a fortune is a success. We must rather say he who has not given his fortune and made a character is a failure. The true test of life is character; first the making of our own and then aiding in making the character of other people. Success in life must be measured not by the accumulation of material wealth, but by the growth of personal character and usefulness in forming the character o others.

Look again at the man who is living for *fame*. He has fully made up his mind to be popular. The way of accomplishing his purpose does not at first appear very clear, but he determines to be talked of and admired. Not to be continually before the public and to have his name on all lips is to him worse than death. He is perhaps so hungry for fame that he mistakes notoriety for popularity. However, he must in some way keep before the eye of the public; his name must be seen on placards and in newspapers. Perhaps he seeks a place in the town council, or on the board of guardians, or on the school board, or the county council, or the bench of magistrates. This is good and praiseworthy if he has leisure and fitness for the position, and if he really wishes to benefit society. He may soar higher still, and seek a place in Parliament. This is honour-

able to a man himself and beneficial to the commonwealth, when he is disinterestedly qualified for a seat in the Government of the country; but when mere vulgar ambition prompts him to become a member of the legislature, he is serving himself and not his country. There are multitudes of men, good in a way, but perhaps weak and mistaken, who go on wooing fame in every possible form, likely and unlikely, till it eats all goodness out of the heart, and leaves them feeble and useless to the community.

I do not for one moment wish to intimate that this is simply a failing peculiar to men in secular life. Men in the most sacred office are as liable to low ambition as any other class of men. There are ministers of Christianity who were when young highly spiritual in tone and character, and who for years maintained their lofty devotion to the cause of the Cross; but they were flattered by foolish people, and became weak enough to accept every palatable opinion about their wonderful cleverness, till they were swollen with pride and self-importance. They yielded to the temptation to preach what were considered popular sermons. Ultimately they got fairly on the stream of popular excitement, till popular excitement became necessary to them—became in fact their master. They could not live without popular applause. And it soon became evident to their best friends that they must pay the common price of popularity; must yield to popular taste and amuse the public instead of instructing the people. When one small dose of amusement failed to excite and please the people they had to increase the dose. They had not the courage to become unpopular; could not

submit to have their fair fame clouded. It ended in their becoming secular lecturers, editors of newspapers or magazines, or devoting themselves to literature; or it ended in something infinitely worse. Their course was like a day commencing in brilliant sunshine but ending in cloud and storm. Some men with calm dignity and strong principle beautifully preserve a legitimate popularity by the influence of Jesus Christ; while other men preach themselves and not Christ Jesus the Lord, and so become thoroughly demoralised. We have all known men of this type in and out of the Christian ministry, who in the days of their religious simplicity were splendid characters. But a little local popularity completely spoiled them. They soon got their heads turned, then their hearts were turned; they were difficult to manage, and were not worth much to anybody or to any organisation. The tree died at the root, the stream dried up at the source.

It is perhaps as easy to secure a little fame as it is to obtain a little wealth—if people make up their minds to it and are willing to pay the ordinary price. To acquire national, European, or world-wide popularity may be far more difficult, and may require splendid gifts or noble principles, and call for the diligent cultivation and constant exercise of all their talents. But to command a little local or district fame only requires common fluency, ordinary self-assertion, average sense, and determination to allow no opportunity to pass unimproved; and this average talking power and average self-confidence will make a man's local position in most neighbourhoods. If a man will go to public

meetings, persist in speaking a little, and move amendments till his time comes to go with parties—his fame is made. Or if he will come to the front in any patriotic or philanthropic movement, he will get reported in the local newspapers, till the public becomes familiar with his name, and his reputation, such as it is, will be made. And when you carefully watch this type of men you soon find that they grow dissatisfied and sour in disposition, because, as they conceive, they do not get their proper place in a meeting, or the most important pulpits in the locality, or the most important offices in the Church, or they are not properly consulted when any new enterprise is set on foot, or some other trifle offends their excessive self-importance, lowers their reputation, and so they turn away disgusted, and you see no more of them. They join another party, another church, or another organisation—and from their fancied eminence look down on the inferior people they have left. They were more important than the cause of the Cross, the cause of the nation, the cause of humanity; would not take a lower place if the highest was denied them; and their fame became more to them than their souls or the souls of others.

Now as Christians *we must find our highest fame in the honour and glory of Jesus Christ*; we must always subordinate our reputation to His. He taught us to regard shame and reproach in His service as our glory and joy. "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." It looks like taking away our good name, soiling our

honour, and humbling us to the very dust. But in reality no one can touch our reputation. It is in the keeping of Jesus Christ, and He will effectually vindicate our character before the intelligent universe at the Judgment. John Wesley did not greatly trouble himself to defend his good name, but intimated to anxious people that when he gave himself to Jesus Christ he gave Him his good name too. The Apostle Paul acted on the same principle, and gloried in the Cross, the symbol of shame and dishonour to Jew and Greek and Roman in that age. We must be content if Christ's name be exalted, be above every name in theology, art, literature, law, government, and especially in daily life among men, in business life, political life, family life—statesmen, kings, queens, and all bringing their glory and honour to Him.

Some again are living for *pleasure*. This is a pleasure-loving age, and the excessive love of pleasure is one of its chief characteristics. We are certainly not living in a puritanical age, but a reaction from a former age of Puritanism has fairly set in. People want to know how they may most enjoy life, secure the largest measure of pleasure with the least risk of disappointment, and the least effort to obtain it. Some are living for the pleasures of the table. "What shall we eat and what shall we drink?" Appetite is defied. "Their god is their belly." If they do not indulge in coarse gluttony they do indulge in the immoderate gratification of their taste for rich foods and expensive wines. Appetite overcomes the nobler aspirations of life. They say life is brief and uncertain; the present is sure and the future

doubtful, and so they will have a short and merry life. They are content with splendid animalism, satisfied with gross material enjoyments. Others are living for the pleasures of the glass. Over-eating is no temptation to them, but intoxicating drink is ; and if not guilty of helpless drunkenness, they are in a state of semi-intoxication all the year round. The quantity of spirituous liquor they consume ought to make them drunk if it does not. Yet they are not ordinarily classed among drunkards. Others are living for refined pleasure—music, art, science, literature, and travel. Vulgar enjoyments have no charm for them, but intellectual pleasures have a peculiar fascination.

But the tendency of it all is earthward. You may speak to people in pursuit of material enjoyments about the higher and nobler pleasures of the Christian life, but they turn a deaf ear to the charms of spiritual religion and go on in their mistaken ways. In summer they make tours on the Continent, and in winter go to balls and concerts. In new forms and in old forms, at home and away from home, they are perpetually seeking the gratification of the senses. The eye is ever seeing, yet they want to see more—to see other countries, other landscapes, other styles of architecture, other picture galleries, and other kinds of entertainments or fashionable society. The ear is always hearing, yet they want to hear more—to hear fresh intelligence, fresh music, fresh singers, fresh actors, fresh orators, fresh philosophers, fresh theologians. Their life is one perpetual whirl of excitement. Sober-minded life is intolerable dulness. But they only secure butterfly blessedness, and miss the abiding

joys of spiritual Christianity. They will have worldly pleasure at any cost—and pay dearly for it. Prince Bismarck said: "I feel weak and languid, but not ill. My illness is the want of the joy of life. My existence is no longer of any use. I have no official duties, and what I see as an onlooker gives me no pleasure. Should I live longer it will still be the case. I feel lonely. I have lost my wife, and as regards my sons they have their own business. With growing age I have also lost interest in agriculture. I rarely visit fields and woods since I can no longer ride, shoot, and move about as I like. Little by little politics begin to tire me." This is sufficiently melancholy for a leading man of the world, who has tasted the sweets of the highest offices of state, and is a good illustration of all that earthly pleasure can do for even its greatest devotees.

Jesus Christ has taught us to seek our pleasure in things higher than all material enjoyments; not in any gratification of the lower nature, but in spiritual culture and service. Our supreme pleasure is to be found in communion with God, making other people happy, and working for the universal establishment of Christianity. We must rise into the broad, sympathetic, Christlike life of caring for the whole family of man. Enoch before his translation "had witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing to God." Can we think of any greater pleasure to any man on this earth than that his course of living has been pleasing to God Himself. To be a pleasure to a dear old friend is an exquisite joy. His pleasure is our pleasure. So we may enter into the mind and purposes of Jesus Christ, become

one with Him in the enterprise of the Cross; and it will be our loftiest blessedness to be associated with Him in His great redemptive work—not a burden, not a reluctant service, not a degrading slavery, but a special dignity, a peculiar glory, an abounding joy.

Some people are living for *personal ease and comfort.* They want no disturbing elements in their history, never have a thought of putting themselves out of the way for the good of other people. Why should they care for incompetent men and women who will not take the trouble to look after their own interests? Let every man bear his own burden and not cast it on somebody else. Leave decent, well-behaved, sober-minded, intelligent members of the community to their quiet reflections and love of ease as they elect to live. Why should they be disturbed in their ease and comfort simply because so many choose to blight their prospects and ruin their character by doing what they know beforehand will bring misery on themselves and their offspring? Let them take the consequences of their folly and misdeeds. But Jesus Christ cared for the outcasts. He gave up ease, comfort, luxury, honour, and every earthly good for the welfare of men and the glory of the Father, and has taught us to do the same. Of Lord Palmerston, with all his good qualities, it is said: "He knew nothing of human life below his carriage-steps—with the world of people on the pavement he had no familiarity. He had only a carriage knowledge of mankind." The influence of Jesus Christ must and will overcome this ignorance, indifference, and selfish neglect of the

interests of the people. Every man for himself is not a maxim inspired by Jesus Christ, but is of Satan. Instead of living in luxurious and careless indifference to the claims of God and man, there must be enthusiasm in the service of society, an all-consuming zeal in saving men and women from the slavery of sin. Such at least is Christianity after Jesus Christ, which is not content to give a handsome subscription to buy itself off from hard and inconvenient personal effort, but gives itself in self-sacrificing endeavour.

Some men are living for *power*. Power is peculiarly sweet to them. They delight above many in a little brief authority. It does not follow that a man is in himself a greater man because he occupies a greater office than another man. As you approach a tree on the summit of a hill it looks taller than it really is; and many a man in high office appears to be more clever and important than he really is in himself. Raising him on a platform in great meetings and annual assemblies does not make him greater mentally and morally, any more than planting a tree on the top of the hill makes it greater among trees. Yet some men would almost sell their souls for power—to appear to be great among men. They want power in the Church, in the State, in the town or county council, in the club, in the family, in the circle of friends—power anywhere, at any cost; but power for self-exaltation, and not sanctified power to do good. Such love of power is a vulgar ambition, and not a devout Christian aspiration.

Now Jesus Christ takes hold of man and fills him with spiritual power; intelligent, holy, unselfish power; the power

of usefulness, the power to do good, the power to glorify God and to extend the influence of the gospel among the nations. This is the grandest of all power. Not power for self-exaltation, but for the honour of Jesus Christ. Not power to gratify ambition, but to render service to Christianity. Not power which is sweet for its own sake, but for the sake of society. Not power for personal ends, but for the interests of the kingdom of God. This was so in the case of Paul. Martin Luther sought and exercised power, not for himself but for the good of others. John Wesley used his power to spread scriptural holiness through the land. Our foreign missionaries are seeking and using power, not to further their individual interests but the salvation of the heathen. Our home missionaries are embracing and wielding power in the slums, not for their own advantage, but for the uplifting of the fallen. Our Sunday-school teachers are not seeking power to make a name, but to impress the name of Christ on the rising population of our country. Christian men and women are not seeking self-aggrandisement. Their power is employed in making the world sweeter to live in for everybody.

Some men are living for *intellectual culture.* Culture to them is the sole and supreme aim of life, and all else sinks into comparative insignificance before mental development. These intellectual men frequently rest in the works of God, and do not rise in thought and heart to God Himself. Many poets and painters see marvellous beauty in nature, but do not see the beauty of Christian holiness. Mental and moral philosophers see and analyse mind and motives

and the fitting relations of beings to each other, but do not find their way to Jesus Christ as sinners needing a Saviour. Men devoted to physical science see matter, but cannot by the laws of nature find their way into the kingdom of grace. Men devoted to literature would often barter their souls for the joys of successful authorship, but do not much care for the joys of spiritual religion. Some of them have talent and not genius, and some have both, but they cannot either by talent or genius become spiritually pure. Among our men of intellect we may include large numbers of politicians, lawyers, and medical men. But these men of intellect cannot by the mere force of mind find out what the Christian life really is and how they may truly live it. Many a poor ignorant artisan knows more about the life of God in the soul than these men of mere intellectual culture.

When we go to these proud men of intellect and tell them if they will only forsake sin and humbly trust in Jesus Christ for salvation they may obtain a glorious spiritual life, they say we are narrow, fanatical, and simply propagating error. They tell us that nature is perfectly silent about such a life, that reason is silent about it, that science and philosophy are silent about it, and that only a few weak-minded people speak about it as a possible experience and conscious enjoyment. They have chosen nature and reason for their guides and rejected Jesus Christ; rejected His revelation, teaching, authority, and made a Bible of intellect. They refuse to submit intellect to the authority of its great Giver, and, subordinating all their faculties to Jesus Christ, to

believe in Him like a little child—with the child's sincerity, honesty, and teachableness of disposition. It is the old world-story: "The Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." And in our age, as in the days of Paul, we have simply one Saviour to offer all grades of intellect and all classes of the community: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." If they could be saved by reason instead of faith, by intellect instead of Jesus Christ, they would gladly enter into the kingdom of Christianity. Intellect has its proper place in religion, reason holds a lofty relation to Christianity; indeed Christianity sanctifies, exalts, and ennobles intellect; but reason must accept the arrangement of Jesus Christ in the kingdom of grace. The culture of intellect is much, but not all-sufficient for mankind. And if men will keep to worldly means and methods in dealing with spiritual religion, keep to pure reason and mental or material science as against the heavenliness of Christianity, they must of necessity suffer serious moral loss.

No doubt the gospel is very humbling and perplexing to the men of mere intellect; but that is simply because these men of intellect will not stoop to try Christianity on its own conditions as they test all science. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." That is to say, he shall have satisfactory evidence of the truth of Christianity in his personal consciousness. This is fair and open and honest;

but our clever men of intellect will persist in attempting to learn what Christian life is by the exercise of the intellect alone—and it can only be learnt by the heart mainly. They wish to make Christianity purely intellectual, a system of religion all mind and not a thing for the heart as well; in point of fact, they wish to make a god of intellect, to exalt intellect out of the proper place it holds in the economy of God. This is a much more common and grievous mistake than is generally supposed. When God asked Adam if he had eaten of the forbidden fruit, he simply replied: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The popular view is that it was weak and cowardly of the man to put the blame on the woman. So it was if that were all that is meant. But I am afraid it is far worse and much deeper than that—the blame is put on God Himself. It was because God had given him the woman. As much as to say that he was quite right till God brought the woman to him. That was the source of all the mischief. So it was really God's fault. This is like Robert Burns saying: "The light that led astray was light from heaven." That is to say, it was all the fatal gift of genius. No, it was not the fault of genius but the abuse of it. It is not the gift of mind but the abuse of it which leads men astray. Not genius or the culture of genius which is wrong or mischievous in society, but the perversion and prostitution of genius. The misuse of intellectual gifts is man's own act and deed, for which man is responsible to God and the community. And the right use of gifts points to

the development of character, to all which is implied in personality, and is greater than mere intellect—it is moral greatness.

The pagan thought the highest life was reached by self-culture. Culture is not an end in itself. Christianity teaches us that *we are to live for the culture of other people*, and not just to seek intellectual improvement for personal enjoyment. We are to read and think ourselves that we may succeed in the creation of readers and thinkers among men about us, and so make a higher type of Christian men and Christian workers. According to the intimation of the New Testament, a man with five talents may by their diligent use gain other five talents, and a man with two may gain other two. If we come to the lowest intellectual endowments, the man with one talent may by its proper use gain one talent more, and so stand fairly well in the intellectual market. But it is not what men possess to begin with intellectually that we are thinking of just now, but what they make of themselves for the sake of other people. This is not so much a question of brains as the culture of brains that God may be glorified. The possession of brains is determined for every man at his birth, but the use of brains for God is another and very different matter. What we have to consider is not so much what mind people have, but how and for what end they are using that mind. The mental idleness even of Christians, the wrapping of their talents in a napkin and burying God's money in the earth, is the great sin of thousands. They are deliberately refusing to put God's money to the exchangers that He may

receive his own with proper interest. They would be ashamed of physical laziness, but they are not ashamed of intellectual laziness. "Oh! I am no reader or thinker," many a Christian man says, with no sense of shame, as if he were not responsible to God and the community for making the best of himself intellectually. Readers and thinkers are more needed in this age than ever they were. The England of to-day is being filled with loose thinking, with half-thinking, with semi-infidelity, semi-popery; and these erroneous principles are propagated with all the charms of a fine literary style, and with all the fascination of scientific information. Christians will soon find it difficult to defend their Christianity, especially evangelical and nonconformist Christianity, unless they carefully read and think for themselves. We must go to the people individually, speak to them about good books and the best method of mastering them; urge them to read for information bearing on Protestant Christianity, that they may be prepared in these critical times to meet Ritualism and Romanism on the one hand, and scientific scepticism on the other. We must never fear truth from any quarter, but stand like a rock against error and evil in every form.

The clock is set and regulated by the sun; and the moral clock is set and regulated by Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness. The living of men everywhere is more and more fixed and governed by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. His ideas, His motives, His principles, His laws are influencing Christendom and penetrating heathen countries farther and faster than ever they did in any

previous age. The teaching of Christianity gives strength to the heart, firmness to the will, light to the understanding, and purity to the conscience, enabling men to bear up under the trials and discipline of life; and so is far more helpful than wealth and luxuries and all material assistance whatever. What is the finest production of any nation? Not good crops but good character. Jesus Christ is governing the nations, not to gratify and indulge them but to make splendid character. Life in Christendom has come to mean not mere continued existence, but religious character, spiritual development, growth in Christian knowledge and grace, the building up of our moral manhood. Jesus Christ has taught us that "he that loseth his life for His sake shall find it"—shall find a truer, nobler, grander life than he can find outside Christianity. Under Jesus Christ life is becoming larger, brighter, and more glorious and influential from day to day.

Yet the Christian Church is living the lower life of an accommodated Christianity. Christians have one standard to believe in and another to live by. What is the real life they are living? What sort of life ought they to be living? Jesus Christ began with the heart. He altered the thinking, feeling, and aspiration of His followers—and so influenced life in the noblest directions. What is wanted is sincerity, honesty, truthfulness, purity, goodness in all the relations of daily life—to show that the manufacture of cotton, the output of coal, the produce of the farm, together or separately, is not the end of existence, but a good character. Jesus Christ asks Christians to live the higher life He came

to secure for His disciples: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Not a feeble, fitful, uncertain, inconsistent, accommodated life, but one strong, pure, healthy, straightforward, Divine, after His own exalted example. If Christianity were faithfully lived, there would be no room in the world for error and evil.

The low religious aim of Romanism, as a system, is quite evident. Christianity inculcates a new life, which Romanism appears to have abandoned as an impossible ideal outside the cloisters. The Great Teacher said men were to "seek first the kingdom of God." This was to be their primary and supreme concern on earth, and all other interests were simply to be regarded as distractions of mind from this first and all-important pursuit. The Church of Rome, by relegating the New Testament ideal to the monasteries and nunneries, departed from the Early Church as far as any Christian society well could depart from the original ideal. The gorgeous furnishings and the worldly officials of the Church of Rome differ almost infinitely from the Church of Jerusalem. To the rich and highly-placed priest at Rome, reared amidst pomp and luxury, and half heathen at heart, the simple scheme of life taught by Jesus Christ seemed impossible, and therefore not seriously contemplated. But to the Galilean fishermen, as well as to all spiritually-minded people, the scheme of life in the four Gospels is not only reasonable but practical, an ideal to be realised in daily secular business. The Protestant Reformation brought back to us this lost ideal. Perhaps the Church of Rome has always had a few noble souls who mourned

over the great gap which separated the religion of those around them from that of Jesus Christ. St. Bernard and Savonarola, if not Dante, would have enforced a pure and simple way of living if they could have carried out their ideas. And even in this age, the simple life of Jesus Christ seems far more impossible to the wealthy than it does to the poor. He saw and felt this fact when He said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God." The rich, naturally, do not see the Christian programme of life to be so reasonable and practical as the poor do; they have more to give up and overcome in their circumstances than the poor. To them Christianity does not appear to turn water into wine, but to turn wine into water. To reproduce primitive Christianity in this age of luxury and the love of worldly respectability seems an impractical thing. Yet we must struggle toward the original ideal of the New Testament till we reach it. The view of life in the four Gospels subordinates this life to the next, makes religion supreme in every sphere; while Romanism is quite at home in the existing order of affairs, comfortable in its enjoyment of life, paying the priest to attend to religion for the people, and referring lofty piety to monks and nuns, whom it calls "the religious."

The Established Protestant Church of England *is lowering its Christian aims, and is rapidly following the Church of Rome.* Religious retreats are being founded, and Christianity is fast becoming mechanical and sacramental. This has been proceeding with increasing momentum for nearly half a century. Besides, bishops are in the House of Lords,

and not exclusively confined to their proper spiritual affairs. Many high ecclesiastics are wealthy and worldly. All this is vastly different from the Early Christian Church, from the purity, simplicity, poverty, and spirituality of that glorious Church. Some are of opinion that the Romanising wave of influence in the Church of England has now nearly spent its force, and that there are not wanting evidences of evangelical revival. The High Church party perpetually changes its ground. It is deeply interesting to watch its movements. Will the recent decision of the pope, in regard to Anglican Orders, lead churchmen more and more to trust in Christ's presence and power, to trust to spiritual experience and evidences of Divine grace among them, and not to church order and apostolical succession? When we consider certain movements in the Church of England, it does seem as if Jesus Christ were influencing those aggressive efforts, and giving wonderful spiritual life to the establishment. The dry bones of church forms may live again and become instinct with spiritual life.

The religious aims of Nonconformist churches are also low and disappointing. Many of them are losing the spirit and power of their forefathers, and are living for respectability and not for principle; for luxury and not for self-sacrifice; for the present world and not for the everlasting future. It is astonishing that, from all the nonconforming churches in this age, people are seeking refuge in the Established Church; Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and the Friends are leaving the churches of their ancestors and joining the Episcopalian community. We fear this is too

commonly from a decay of piety, and the longing for social distinction and culture, and not from nobler spiritual aspirations. In some few cases it is probably from conscientious convictions, from principle, from change of opinions; but, in most instances, from purely worldly motives, and not at all on religious grounds. With the characteristic self-depreciation of Englishmen, Nonconformists often look at Anglicans as better than themselves. When will they learn proper self-respect? It is clear that a revival of the better elements of Puritanism is greatly needed, and there are signs of its commencement in the closer union of the Free Churches, and in the circulation of Nonconformist literature. Nonconformity has a great spiritual mission in the England of to-day, and is girding on its armour.

We fairly gather from the full scope of the Gospels that Christianity expands, exalts, ennobles, and sanctifies the aims of human life; lifts it above all low personal ends, and puts it to holy and loving uses; that there is something immensely grander than wealth, fame, pleasure, and intellectual development. I have known many men who had got on in life; that is to say, they had got money, fame, culture, social position; got what are considered the good things of earth. These men have sickened, and in their sickness they have sent for me. When I went to see them they did not want to talk about their material success and social distinctions—they simply wanted to talk about Jesus Christ. I have come away from their sickrooms feeling the infinite littleness of material prosperity in the near prospect of death. These men wanted religion to die with, and they

have said to me if raised up again they would live very differently. The true way of living is to reproduce the life and character of Christ in our own; to sink all interests and pursuits in the cause of the Cross; that by this life of obedience, faith, purity, and self-forgetting love, we may attain a higher, nobler, truer, Diviner aim of existence. The true Christian aim of life is to have elevated thoughts about the honour of God, profound sympathy with Christ in His saving work, lofty joy in spiritual service, exalted purity, enlightened zeal, patient hope, unfailing faith in the ultimate triumph of Christianity. And this Divine life lived in and for Jesus Christ leads up to a perfect life of heaven—as the river flows on to the ocean, and the blossom of the tree is consummated in ripe fruitfulness.

With Paul we must ever say: "For me to live is Christ." This is the deepest consecration of life, if we only think how much it meant for Paul and how much it means for us. It means that life is to be fully given up to Jesus Christ, with all its physical energies, intellectual powers, spiritual affections; with all its resources, opportunities, possessions, advantages, influences—that our all must be fully and for ever dedicated to the glory and service of Jesus Christ. Paul did this, Luther did this, Wesley did this. Pondering the language: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," we must ask: What are we prepared to be and to do for Him? We must not rest content with a splendid theory of full surrender to the service of Jesus Christ. Complete personal consecration must be carried into daily life, and through the individual life Christianity

must exalt and ennoble family life, Church life, national life, making all life everywhere holy, just, and good. Christianity binds men to God, and so binds men to one another; and this is how the influence of Jesus Christ enters into the life of men. Does it seem impossible to maintain lofty Christian aims? The eagle has no difficulty in crossing broad streams. It is too high up in the heavens. And were we living the higher Christian life, we should be delivered from many perplexities and seeming impossibilities.

CHAPTER VII.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Virtues of the People.

The gentler virtues—humility, patience, meekness, contentment, gratitude, self-restraint, purity, love—show us the marvellous flowers of virtue created among men by the influence of Jesus Christ. These differ immensely from the virtues of the Greek and Roman civilisation,—courage, justice, prudence, wisdom,—and though these have never been lacking in the Christian system, before the time of Jesus Christ they tended to self-assertion more than to self-sacrifice. To-day these virtues may be exhibited without the tenderness of love and mercy, and so may easily grow into pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency—unless baptized with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Had the milder virtues held the place of the heroic ones, the world for the past three thousand years would have been a thousandfold happier to live in. Lecky thinks the influence of Jesus Christ has "done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists." The

change effected by Jesus Christ in morality is first of all a change of moral conception, and then one of illustrative example. He taught: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Not blessed are the men of genius, great intellect, great scholarship, great heroes of war, great men of business, and great political leaders. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." The meek are the true kings of society, the real sovereigns of men; and they truly possess the earth by ruling it in its deeper and broader interests. "In the exaltation of the benevolent virtues at the expense of the heroic," says G. J. Romanes, "the change effected is fundamental and abrupt. Christ may be said to have created the virtues of self-abnegation, universal beneficence, unflinching humility, and indeed the supremacy of compassion." In His own life His system of virtue lived, and He was not a mere amiable dreamer. "It is only in the presence of Jesus Christ," Romanes adds, "that the dry bones of ethical abstractions have sprung into life."

Jesus Christ is our Model of Humility. As far as His work would permit He concealed His dignity. There were times when He asserted His supreme Divinity. But He often requested people not to tell what great things He had done for them. He never sought public applause. His conduct is a great rebuke to those disciples who are hungry for the honours of society, and are seeking in every way to build up their personal reputation. He was simple, modest, retiring; and men seeking fame are not imitating Him in the grace of humility. The only true

popularity is humbleness. Longing for the good opinion of men is vanity, and in the end it is mortifying enough. Such have their reward. The flower fades in the hot hand that eagerly gathered it. Some people are so much afraid they will not get credit for their good deeds that they publish on the housetop what they do in private life. It was not thus with Jesus Christ. He loved the work of the Father more than the credit it brought Him with the people. Many Christians look at great things far above them, and the blessings and advantages within their reach they completely miss—like children I have noticed gathering blackberries, who persistently looked toward the top of the bramble-bushes, and missed the ripe bunches at their feet. The great point in Christianity is to look low enough. "Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly." Not seeking to be first in all public movements, but "in honour preferring one another." If you touch the grapes the bloom is gone. The ostentatious parade of humility spoils it. Humility does not concern itself about its beautiful appearance, the fragrance of its good name, but wishes supreme honour to be given to Jesus Christ.

Christian humility in principle differs from that of Jesus Christ, though it may have similar methods of manifestation. In us humility arises from a sense of unworthiness, a conviction of dependence on God for all that is good in us, and from a lofty view of the character of Jesus Christ. It springs from a consciousness of God's love to us in Christ, reconciliation through His Cross, and that we are

made righteous by grace and not by personal merit. Now Jesus Christ had no feeling of unworthiness, no conscious failure in service, no reconciliation with the Father through the merits and mediation of another. He was sinless, perfect in His obedience and in His work. He was truly lowly in heart; not in appearance but in fact, not in semblance but in principle, not occasionally wearing the garment of humility but His everyday dress. So Christians are to be clothed with humility. But in making men humble Jesus Christ does not cramp the faculties of the soul; He gives them larger freedom for the development of their highest aspirations toward His own character. He only suppresses evil and wrong methods of development. Our souls are encouraged to go out after the infinite, and we are humbled because we see Jesus Christ is so high and we are so low in spiritual attainments. In Him there is so much to admire, to imitate, to grow up to; the space for growth seems boundless. There is no room for foolish pride when we look at Jesus Christ. The more we are elevated in soul the more we are humbled. This is always the way Jesus Christ deals with His disciples; humbling them by their loftiest aspirations. Hence Christian humility is willing to part with all self-importance, which is not only disagreeable to work with, but hinders the progress of Christianity; like steam, it will work in all seasons and circumstances, in all localities, on the hill or in the valley, in public or private, at home or abroad. Jesus Christ by the force of His personal character generates a most beautiful modesty in many who are outside the Christian Church. Darwin

says: "Many persons think that what I have done in science has been much overrated, and I very often think so myself; but my comfort is that I have never consciously done anything to gain applause." He had breathed an atmosphere created by Jesus Christ.

In too many cases there is a professional humility which takes care duly to exhibit itself before the multitude on all great occasions. We must have not the feigned humility of the mere religious actor, but the genuine humility of the true Christian. And the higher we grow in grace the deeper we must strike our roots in humility, or else the storms of life sweeping over us will lay us prostrate on the ground, while others not towering so loftily will escape the power of the tempest and stand when we have fallen. Indeed, the old crooked tree is often left standing after the pitiless blast has passed, and the tall, sprightly tree lies on the field. The old tree was half dead and only fit for firewood, as it stood there in its sheltered and lowly place. But the tall, splendid tree was the pride and glory of the landscape. Men stopped to admire it as they went along the highroad. So it is sometimes with the most splendid trees of righteousness we are permitted to gaze on. Human pride creeps in and does terrible damage occasionally. The old and inferior Christians remain standing a little longer to glorify God in their lowliness, while those who have become great and important in their own eyes are swept away in their pride by the storm. I have seen the finest tree on the estate broken off in the middle of the trunk by the strong wind. It was openly exposed and

towered high. Every position has its danger, just as the winter has its keen frost and its snowstorms, and the summer its thunder and lightning. The most gifted and the most privileged may not bring most glory to God. I have seen an aged hawthorn tree, with hollow trunk and bending nearly to the ground, producing fine blossom and berries—just like the humble Christian bringing forth fruit in old age, consistent and useful to the last.

The humility of Jesus Christ is seen in His becoming man. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God" —as the Authorised Version has it. "Counted it not a prize to be on equality with God"—as rendered in the Revised Version. Or as in the margin—"a thing to be grasped." This view is adopted by Lightfoot and Ellicott, who may be presumed to have had considerable influence with the Revisers. Professor Beet renders it: "Did not count it a means of high-handed self-enrichment." Thus: "No high-handed self-enrichment did He deem the being equal with God." Or, as he put it in his paper in the *Expositor*: "Deem not His being equal with God a means of grasping. Jesus Christ is thought to be here contemplating His own Divine powers, in view of His approaching entrance into the world. He did not look upon His equality with God as a means of laying hold for Himself, after becoming man, of the good things of earth—wealth, enjoyment, power; but instead of this laid aside the form of God, *i.e.* the assertion of His Divine powers, and took His lot merely as a man among men. Christ thus presents an infinite contrast to the gods of Homer, who ever used

their superhuman powers for their own enjoyment." He thus emptied Himself, "stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty."

Jesus Christ taught *humility by precept and by example.* He urged men not to select for themselves the chief seats in the synagogue, or at the marriage feast, or to love greetings in the market-place; but rather to take the lowest place, and avoid all that feeds the deep hunger of the heart for distinction. Men may properly value the respect of their friends and neighbours. There would be a proper sense of honour on the part of the friend called to a higher seat among the invited guests at the marriage in the parable spoken by Jesus Christ; and Christianity does not condemn proper feelings of self-respect. The principle inculcated by Him is applicable to conduct generally. He seemed only to be teaching good manners, but He was teaching good morals as well; and our behaviour as Christians must be such as will everywhere honour God and help men. But whatever else the parable of the marriage feast is meant to teach, it teaches true humility, and condemns the swollen pride which chooses whenever it can the principal seat of honour, and will not submit to an inferior position in any company or in any organisation. We all know men who go to the highest places and sit down among the leading people. Sometimes they step too high, and a more honourable person is brought forward to displace them. With shame they take the lower place, feel disgraced before society, and take the mortification to heart. We know others who are modest

and retiring, who care more for the good they can do others than for the honour that comes of doing good, and who in their humility will sit anywhere or with anybody. Men delight to place them above the self-important and self-asserting, and any gentleman will gladly step forward to give them his seat. As a general law, "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Now as Jesus Christ had denounced in the Pharisees the love of chief seats He could never tolerate such a spirit in His own disciples. The followers of such a Master must be humble and self-sacrificing. But how little these men as yet had caught the spirit and meaning of their blessed Lord. We trace this fact through the four Gospels. When He announced the near approach of his arrest, Peter took Him aside "and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto Thee." Jesus Christ had to show him that it was not Peter who was speaking, but Satan in Peter; and the Master forthwith warned the disciples against seductive worldly influences and carnal ambitions. It was for them to be spiritual and humble as the trained ones of such a Teacher. He had to give them lesson after lesson on the pressing necessity of humility—just as He has to give us repeated lessons on the same subject in this age.

Soon after this the Transfiguration occurred. When He came down from the mount He declared the second time that He must suffer death at the hands of the Jewish authorities; and then He appears to have walked on alone,

a little in advance of the disciples, that this statement might sink deeper into their minds. They began dimly to see that a crisis was approaching, that some new development of the Messianic kingdom was near. What was the effect? Instead of making them serious and humble, it awakened ambition. They struggled for place and power when the Master was about to be crucified. And men are doing the same kind of thing to-day, while Jesus Christ is being crucified afresh in deeper and blacker shame. He asked the disciples what it was they so earnestly disputed about, as they walked together on the common road. They saw He had given preference to Peter and James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. What did it mean? Was it an intimation of the leadership of these men when things had grown to a head in the kingdom which Jesus Christ was founding? It was then that He called a child and said to the disciples: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The discipleship must be not only conversion from evils in general, but from unlawful ambition especially; Christians must be as free from longing for place and power as the little child. He who has most of the child's heart is the greatest in Christ's kingdom. He had great reason for discoursing on humility in this way. Children commonly act from rules which are given to them, but men act from principles, having outgrown the rules that were necessary in childhood. But in Christianity we must not altogether lose the child's heart in the strong man's intellect, either in ordinary church work, or in daily life.

The humility of Jesus Christ is seen in lowly service. "For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" as well as "to give His life a ransom for many." His was a life of obscurity and routine, like that of the majority of His followers in every age; a quiet, ordinary, uneventful, commonplace life, till He was thirty years of age. But He felt He was truly serving God and society by carpentry. He has thus shown us that we ought to seek the humility and dignity of service—to serve the Church and the world, it may be, unknown and in obscurity for years. This involves the deepest humility and the highest dignity. Daily work done from proper motives and principles is not work simply done for ourselves and families, but for society at large and for the God of society. It may not always seem so to the busy housewife, the domestic servant, the governess or tutor, as they respectively attend to the work of the kitchen, the nursery, the schoolroom, or other household affairs. It may not always seem so to the mechanic, the joiner, the farm labourer, as the one is busy in the common workshop, and the other day after day toils in the field. It may not always seem so to the grocer, the draper, the druggist, as week by week he stands behind the counter selling his goods. It may not always seem so to the merchant and manufacturer, as he daily goes to and from his office, or warehouse, or mill. There seems so little romance in all this that people can hardly recognise its grandeur. Yet this is just the kind of thing which Jesus Christ did for the greater part of His earthly life. It all truly shows the sublime in the common; and that God and

men are served by ordinary people, as well as by statesmen and philosophers and scholars, or by the preaching of the gospel.

The two sons of Zebedee preferred the ambitious request, either through their mother or by their own lips: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand in Thy glory." Jesus Christ intimated that they little knew what they were asking for themselves; and He put a question to them which went to the very core of the matter: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"—implying that those who occupy the loftiest positions in His service must have the greatest sorrow and suffering; and that the persons capable of bearing the heaviest cross for His sake should be nearest to Him in His kingdom. James and John affirmed that they were able to drink of His cup—and, singular to say, James was the first to suffer martyrdom in His cause, and John lingered longest in the persecutions of the Early Church, and so had his baptism of suffering for the Master. Jesus Christ knew the nobleness of this brace of brothers who were guilty of this piece of unworthy ambition; and, foreseeing the splendid testimony they would bear for Him, He treated them very tenderly in rebuking their want of humility. At the same time He showed that the two highest places of honour in His kingdom could not be given as a piece of religious favouritism, but could only be bestowed on those who possessed the needed gifts and graces for the position. When Jesus Christ died, on His right hand and left were not James and John, but two

thieves. We wonder did James and John at such a time think of their proud request? When the ten heard that these two brothers had definitely requested the most distinguished offices in the kingdom Jesus Christ was about to establish, "they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John." Probably they felt the spirit of rivalry begin to stir in their breast. "And Jesus called them to Him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them." The acknowledged rulers exercise the authority of the superior over the inferior, the principal over the subordinate, the master over the servant. But this order shall not obtain among you, this style of arrangement is foreign to My kingdom. "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all." He shall serve the whole company, the whole of society; and this is in perfect harmony with the spirit and example of Jesus Christ.

Unlawful ambition is not yet dead. Men are saying, which church shall be greatest? which set of church-workers shall be greatest? which class of society shall be greatest? which party shall be greatest? In all the churches men are seeking the highest positions. They want to be first in everything instead of seeking the humility which takes the lowest place of service. It is unspeakably sad when Christians become greater than the cause of God. Like Jesus Christ, they should ever say:

"I am among you as one that serveth"—not as one that wishes to govern, to be looked up to as a great authority in the Church. Whatever else Christianity is, it is one of humble service in the spirit of the Master.

The disciples struggled for precedence to the last. It may be that at the very supper-table in the guest-chamber this unworthy spirit stirred in their bosoms. Their blessed Master was about to return to the Father. Who would have supreme authority when He was gone? If not Peter or James or John, who? Jesus Christ had often rebuked this jealous feeling, but would give them an effectual lesson before leaving them—not one of simple verbal reproof, but more touching and significant. He took off His upper garment, girded Himself with a towel, and washed the disciples' feet. None of them had offered to do for Him or for one another what He now did for them. It was the work of slaves to wash the dusty feet of the travel-stained. Awed and humbled by this act, the disciples were speechless till He came to the irrepressible Peter, who said: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But the disciple must accept the will of the Master even when he least understands it. He said to Peter: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." That was enough, and Peter submitted to the operation. Jesus Christ meant to teach them the greatness of service, the nobleness of humility, the true grandeur of work that might appear low and menial in the estimation of the world. He said to them: "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash

one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done unto you." Here is the King of Glory doing the work of a common slave. Is there after this any work which any Christian can refuse to do for Him? The cedar in the Church may take the place of the common thorn and consider itself dignified in its usefulness.

Jesus Christ is our perfect Pattern of Patience. He waited for some thirty years in obscurity before entering on His public ministry, and did not fret and chafe because He had to remain so long before He was allowed to engage in the great work of His life among men. To wait like that would certainly be a severe tax upon many of us in this age of hurry and bustle, especially in regard to any undertaking which we felt to be our true life-work. Darwin continued his patient observations for twenty years before publishing some of his scientific theories, which was most magnificent waiting. Moses, though said to be the meekest of men, impatiently slew an Egyptian, and thus rashly anticipated his call to deliver Israel from bondage. He supposed that his Hebrew brethren would have understood that this act was the beginning of their deliverance; and it appears probable that by this one impatient act he put back a good cause four decades—for he had to flee into the desert of Midian and remain in obscurity for the space of forty years. But Jesus Christ waited patiently till the Father's purposes were mature, and the times were ripe for His magnificent enterprise. He did not strike a premature blow in the interests of spiritual freedom, like many impatient

national reformers have done in delivering their blows for political and religious liberty.

Now Jesus Christ's patient waiting for long, weary years at Nazareth before engaging in His public work has a valuable lesson to teach Christians. Some churches are very impatient when baffled in any enterprise; and perhaps God apparently defeats them in order to show them better methods of doing their work, or to show them a better kind of work to do, or finer openings for their means and energies. Some ministers in the home work and some missionaries to the distant heathen deeply feel the importance of their department of service, and conclude that such work should be done immediately in spite of all difficulties; and so are in danger of losing faith and self-control if there be wise and necessary delay in the execution of projected schemes. War sometimes breaks out, or a commercial crisis comes, or disease intervenes, or national legislation interferes with liberty to preach in certain districts, or something unexpectedly occurs to hinder the evangelisation of the people; but God may be wisely overruling all these impediments for the ultimate and complete success of His gospel. Christians must learn not only energetically to labour but patiently to wait for the openings of Providence.

Waiting the will of God in important matters is a great test of character. For example, the workman waiting for work, the young man who has finished his apprenticeship waiting for a situation, the examined waiting for the result of the examination, the correspondent waiting for a reply to

an important letter, the tradesman waiting to transact business with the agent who does not return to the office when expected, the general waiting for reserves in war-time, and the enemy expected to rush on him every hour—waiting and making the very best of things shows the strong man. But as spiritual work is more important than secular work, it is a higher test of character patiently to wait till Providence reveals the purposes of God to His faithful servants. Take the case of the missionary waiting to go abroad, and the heathen perishing, yet the man of God delayed month after month and even longer in some instances; the candidate waiting for acceptance into the Christian ministry, when he has felt the Divine call to the office for years; the Christian waiting for admission into heaven, when he thought he was just entering, but is detained at the mouth of the harbour or has to put back to sea like a ship that was entering port. In these days we must be long-tempered men and not easily put out of the way. "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit"—who is overcome by his self-importance. Our impatience is a mark of our ignorance and weakness. We are like Jacob's mother, who could not wait the evolution of Providence, but must manage matters by deception even to secure the birthright for her favourite son. So we impatiently take our destiny into our own hands, which means taking it out of God's hands, because He proceeds too slowly for our impatient spirit.

The patience of Jesus Christ is seen in *quietly listening to the stories told by those who came to Him for help.* Those stories were sometimes long and painful, but He did not cut

the narrator short in a fit of petulance. He was patient with the weakest and most troublesome, who could not state their case eloquently; patient when the applications for material or spiritual assistance were most numerous, frequent, and wearisome; patient when the disciples were irritable and wanted Him to send the people away. Sorrows and afflictions never kept Jesus Christ from the people; these sorrows and afflictions drew Him nearer to them, and His patience was equal to all the public and private demands made upon it. It was an all-enduring and inexhaustible patience, under disappointment, pressure of work, weariness of mind, and exhaustion of physical nature. We grow tired by the applications of the people who come to us a few times for help; we say they are always coming, we have never done with them, and must in some way get without them.

The patience of Jesus Christ in *teaching and training His disciples* is truly marvellous. He had to bear with their dulness, their egregious blunders, and their serious misapplications of the simple truth. Their weaknesses and inconsistencies were almost passing belief; yet He bore with these men in a kindly and patient way. Here is an important lesson for Christian ministers in dealing with their churches, for Sunday-school teachers in dealing with their scholars, for parents in dealing with their children, for friends in dealing with their friends, for neighbours in dealing with their neighbours. Jesus Christ was more patient than the schoolmaster with his pupils, more patient than the master with the apprentice, more patient than the professor with

the students. We are to be patient with people when they do not see a point as clearly and quickly as we think they should; patient when they do not at once embrace principles which we think important and self-evident; patient when such blindness and blundering impedes the progress of truth and righteousness.

The patience of Jesus Christ is astonishing when we consider *what He had to bear from His own countrymen.* "He came to His own and His own received Him not," but became His bitterest enemies. "He was despised and rejected of men"—by the very men who ought to have been the first to rally round His standard and support His cause. He might have crushed them with His omnipotent finger, but allowed them to live and even to put Him to death. Does not this show us how patient we ought to be when our fellow-citizens take bad ways and go against us; when working men do not go to church or chapel; when children are wicked and wayward in the fields and streets; when all sorts of characters are opposed to our evangelistic efforts? If our Lord and Master did not lose patience in difficulty and discouragement, who are we that we should lose ours? To-day we need more than common patience with masters and workmen, with electors and legislators, with socialists and educationists, with Ritualists and Romanists, with Dissenters and State-churchmen, with the openly immoral and the half-hearted Christian, with the improvidence, idleness, and recklessness of men. How soon we feel grieved and disappointed with the outcasts, and turn away from them in disgust if they do not reform after we have taken some small

pains with them. We have too commonly acted the part of the bond-slave in the parable, who was in debt and had nothing to pay with; we too have said: "Lord, have patience with me and I will pay Thee all." When the Lord has forgiven us all our debt we have been impatient with our fellow-servants, seizing them by the throat, casting them into prison, sternly demanding the payment of all they owe us. His patience toward us should be the measure of our patience toward others. This is the strength and beauty of Christianity, poetry and philosophy combined, to be made a living thing and not a mere splendid theory.

Jesus Christ was *patient under the greatest provocations.* "What glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow in His steps." Jesus Christ was insulted, maligned, misrepresented in idea, motive, deed, in character and life; every form of indignity and ill-treatment was deliberately practised on Him. He said it would be so too with His followers. He used strong language: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." You will certainly have a great battle, but patience will gain the victory; your patience is your salvation, especially when reviled and persecuted on account of Christianity. It is under such circumstances that you see that the patient man is the strong man. We have often thought of that small group of brave men, hated and forsaken of all, yet Jesus Christ telling them in that

dark hour their patience was their only chance of victory. But is it not so too in this age? We naturally think people might oppose us if we were bent on the destruction of human interests. But to take away our character, to brand us with every odious epithet, to oppose our social and religious usefulness, does seem singular to human reason, and even more singular that Jesus Christ should ask us to be patient under it. Yet this is precisely what He did require. The provocations of life are intended to make us gentle, forbearing, enduring, and are through grace beneficial on Christian character and work. "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle toward all"—even when they are not the least gentle toward him. Like Jesus Christ, of whom prophecy said: "He shall not strive nor lift up His voice in the street," the disciple must be quiet and patient, which is the truest heroism in any age. This patient gentleness enabled Jesus Christ to triumph; it also enabled the Early Christians to triumph; it brought victory to the Puritans of England, the Covenanters of Scotland; it gave victory to the Early Methodists; and it will give victory to Christians universally in the battle with wicked men.

Jesus Christ *patiently waited for the vindication of His character and the triumph of His cause* when contradicted and opposed. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, knowing all the while that the Cross would be victorious; and so He calmly waited for the issue of the conflict. Satan had his day, but Jesus Christ would have His day, and it would certainly be one of surpassing

splendour. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." This is being magnificently fulfilled to-day; the nations are feeling the attractions of Christ's Cross. And on our part, as on the part of Jesus Christ, there must be the power of patient waiting for expected victory. It must be so in common life, in Christian affairs, in church difficulties. When contentions and strifes come to us we must be yielding and lenient, "sober-minded, temperate; no brawlers, no strikers, but gentle," with a Christlike gentleness, which will make our turbulent opponents ashamed of themselves, and give us power to conquer in the Christian warfare. If outraged in a thousand ways and unable to obtain justice on earth, we must quietly allow matters to stand over till the Judgment, when things will be put right. If deliverance be delayed, if what we anticipated be postponed, if promised good be yet a great way off, we must still be patient. This is one of God's methods of training us to do His will, and we learn in this way the noble oratory of silence, the marvellous energy of standing still to see the salvation of God. This is much more easy to some Christians than it is to others. The thoughtful, quiet, contemplative man of God can wait the end of all things much more easily than the energetic, impulsive Christian. The Psalmist said: "I waited patiently for the Lord." This is exactly what some find it most difficult to do, but what God is training them to do.

In season and out of season Jesus Christ *patiently per-*

severed in His efforts for the good of men and the glory of the Father. The field in the parable is said to be the world, and the sower is the Son of Man. For us too the field is the whole world, and the appointed work is patient sowing everywhere. It will be necessary for us to exercise long patience, like the agriculturist who month after month waits for the precious fruits of harvest. He puts in the seed; the season is dry, the rain is long in coming—seems as if it never would come, as if the crop would be a failure; but the rain comes at last, the sunshine follows the showers, the corn springs up, grows, ripens, and is safely gathered in, and the patient efforts of the farmer are rewarded. There is no employment calling for greater patience than that of the husbandman. But when a good harvest is reaped he is abundantly repaid for all his toils and anxieties. So it is with the Christian husbandman when there is a splendid harvest of converts to Christianity. The farmer only gets one crop of wheat a year, and that by hard toil. In nature patient labour is the everlasting law. There is no dodging natural law; men cannot get away from law. And we cannot transgress the law of Christian labour with impunity. In the Church, as in nature, the crop will slowly follow the sowing, the fruit the flower. The great lesson of patience is taught in all history, in almost every page of the Bible, in all the operations of nature, and especially in the example of Jesus Christ. Under the most painful discouragement and apparent failures in the field of toil we must "stablish our hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand"; our struggles will be over, our

joy complete, our reaping boundlessly blessed, and many sheaves will be gathered in glory we never saw in the field of toil on earth.

As Jesus Christ left us *the most perfect example of patience*, the apostle says: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Prince Leader of His people, the Author and Finisher of our faith." Looking to Him we shall not only see the finest example of patience in history, the most marvellous constancy in suffering, the most steadfast endurance under insult and persecution, and the most unparalleled holding out in the hardest and most laborious service, but we shall obtain grace from Him to be patient as He was. Like Him we must take up every cross without murmuring; our foot must not falter in the path of duty; in the furnace we must submit to the scorching flames; in the wilderness we must endure the inconvenience and not faint and grow weary; in the battle we must not flinch or turn coward; when the burden is heavy we must not lay it down, but bear it bravely to the last; and when hope is delayed we must not grow sick at heart and yield to despair. Patience is the power of waiting God's appointed time. This is precisely what so many of us cannot do. We are like the Israelites, who could not wait for Moses coming down from the mount, and said to Aaron: "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." When we cannot see our Divine Moses amid the dark clouds of discipline, we must patiently wait for Him,

that He may safely conduct us over stream and moor and mountain to the promised land.

Jesus Christ is creating *universal holiness.* Men for ages had been speculating and theorising on human virtue, and found that their loftiest dreams were perfectly powerless. But in the four Gospels virtue is breathed into by Jesus Christ and made a living thing. This virtue is seen in the life and character of its Great Teacher, seen in its purity and perfection, but seen also in some fair degree in the life and character of His disciples. The practical, everyday, working idea of holiness is obtained exclusively from the Christian Scriptures. The study of the science of comparative religions does not supply us with a working morality; we are not informed how we may obtain the necessary power to become and to continue righteous. It never occurred to any uninspired mind how depraved men might become truly holy in daily life. This is a God-given idea, and only carried into experience by Divine grace. The best elements of the religions of the world are from Jesus Christ, but are not for one moment to be compared with the clear and authoritative teaching of Christianity. As Godet intimates: "Holiness in Christians is the supernatural in its highest form."

Christianity is given for the sanctification of the people. This we clearly gather from the prayer of Jesus Christ: "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth." The Bible is a book with a holy mission. "So it comes to pass," says Professor J. Rendall Harris, "that we must say 'God' and 'holiness' as nearly as possible in the same breath; so

that God may make holiness possible, and holiness make God real." Like Jesus Christ we must seek the sanctification of the people in the truth—in the sphere of the truth, that they may breathe an atmosphere of truth; and we must ever follow Him in maintaining that the revelation of the Father in the Son is the truth, the Divine reality in which alone true character is formed and built up and consecrated to the highest ends. This is the washing of water by the Word, the cleansing efficacy of the truth. The idea of Christian holiness ultimately rests on the character of God as revealed in the Bible, especially on the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Of course we must believe in the personal Christ as well as in His teaching the truth, and believe that the Bible is the guide to holiness and true nobility of character. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." The Bible has been the salvation of many a young man for both worlds. And this shows that it ought to be his constant companion.

Christianity gives us the deepest, truest, broadest morality; not holiness for a narrow party, a small sect, an insignificant community, but holiness for the whole Church, the whole nation, the whole race of man; holiness for business, for literature, for art, for politics, for all life, inward and outward. The virtue of some people is negative in character, and consists in simply refusing to do what is forbidden because it is forbidden—and in this negative virtue they rest perfectly satisfied. But Christian virtue is positive as well as negative; it uses liberty, but does not abuse it;

abstains from evil, but lives in the love and practice of righteousness; it knows and does the will of God. One of the strongest beliefs of Macdonell of the *Times* was that all morality is rooted in a sense of obligation to God, and that the only power strong enough to make human beings do duty, when duty is painful, is the desire to obey God; and this safeguard to society he held the Comtists would destroy. Christianity saves us from this danger, producing a morality instinct with wisdom, fidelity, and love—and love is the soul of true morality. Christian holiness is the morality of the Old Testament in its fulness and perfection: the Old Testament morality transformed and glorified—the ideals of Jesus Christ governing life in every department of service.

All that is highest, noblest, purest, and best in modern life is due to the influence of Jesus Christ. It is in consequence of the life of Jesus Christ among men that in this age mankind have a lofty ideal, which is fruitful of a thousand blessings in a thousand different ways. The life of the Incarnate Son of God is a pattern of life for all men to-day. As He lived a life of unreserved devotion to the will and work of the Father, we learn to live a life of unreserved devotion to Jesus Christ. This is the noblest and highest life possible to man on this earth. The aim which Jesus Christ places before men commends itself to them as one worthy of the greatest efforts, and worthy of all the self-denial and self-sacrifice which it involves. This is in reality loyalty to the highest interests of the community, and it stimulates us to seek the highest excellence of character,

and induces us to exercise all our powers to advance the kingdom of God. What lives and treasures are lavished upon attempts to discover the North Pole. It is right in the interests of science that we should discover it; but what of neglecting millions of human beings and spending so much money on this project? At anyrate, let us discover and elevate man as Jesus Christ intended we should.

Jesus Christ gives health to the soul of man and heals a diseased civilisation. One characteristic of this age is despair. In weariness and hopelessness men are asking if life be worth living. Not unless lived in and for Jesus Christ. This despair we see in every circle of society. The busy merchant struggling for success wonders if after all the gain is worth the worry. The voluptuous are worn out with dissipation and every form of indulgence, till at length they conclude that the best thing is to get out of the weariness and disappointments of life by its voluntary termination, and hence the increasing number of suicides. Gay society is going through the inquiry of the book of Ecclesiastes,—one of the oldest and one of the most modern books,—and the answer for us is found in that splendid old book, with the deeper meaning read into it by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Much of the poetry of the age is the poetry of despair. The same hopelessness runs through a great part of modern literature. This at bottom is the disease of sin, and Jesus Christ has come to give health to the soul. Life cannot be understood and enjoyed without Him; and even with Him the problems of life are painful enough in every direction; but apart from the light He

casts on them they are insoluble and intolerable. Jesus Christ taught that men need not commit suicide to get out of trouble. They only need bring their burden to Him. He says: "Come to Me, and I will give you rest." He gives men strength bravely to bear up under the burden of life; imparts courage, patience, endurance, and hope—a fuller and nobler life.

Under Jesus Christ thought is quickened that holiness may be spread. How much we live in a short time in this age. Swift trains take us over vast continents, and fast steamers take us over great seas, making us at home in the world at large. Newspapers, telegraphs, telephones give us the latest intelligence. This is emphatically an age of progress, material, intellectual, social, and religious. All this is traceable to Jesus Christ. He is the great moving power in every community in thought, motive, and deed; patriotism, philanthropy, heroism, and all good movements have their origin in Him. He creates our best literature, art, music, science, commerce, as well as our churches and noble institutions. "Mr. Gladstone has ventured to assert that the inventions of the first fifty years of the present century were more remarkable than those of all the centuries preceding it; and the following twenty-five years more remarkable than the previous fifty; and the next ten years more than the previous twenty-five." This fills us with wonder and awe as we think of the age in which we live. What may we not enjoy and do in the kingdom of God? If only filled with the Spirit, and fully consecrated to God, what is there we may not accomplish for Jesus Christ and

for the race? We may spread holiness not only through the land but through the world.

Another virtue of Christianity is *universal benevolence.* The sympathy of Jesus Christ created our ideal of practical benevolence. Canon Gore regards "compassion as a vast force for the bettering and transforming human life, and this was introduced by Christianity. Aristotle, in his catalogue of human attributes, looks upon compassion as a disturbing force in a calm, well-regulated life, something of which we must get rid, a feeling which was best worked off or spent by attending the pathetic dramas of the Greek theatre." Jesus Christ was a grander teacher than Aristotle, and a much greater authority. Francis Bacon, in his sketch of the ideal philosopher, says: "He had a look as if he pitied men." This may be said of the Christian philosopher, who is at once ideal and practical. Pity is very noble even in the philosophers of society, but pity without faith in Jesus Christ has no power to heal and help the world. In Christian compassion there is power, delicacy, tact, a tenderness and throbbing sensitiveness qualifying people for nursing the sick as Florence Nightingale did. The compassion of Jesus Christ was genuine and wise. He only took three disciples into the room with Him when He healed the daughter of Jairus, that she might not be overwhelmed with the crowd; and then He gently took her by the hand that she might be encouraged to take food. He is breathing the same spirit of gentleness into nurses, medical men, and boards of management in our hospitals and infirmaries in this age.

Love is the root of active benevolence. There must be love to God and all mankind; a love kindling kindly feelings and generous impulses, or there will be no kindness in act and deed. Love must become a passion to be and to do like Jesus Christ; a passion to elevate and bless our fellowmen. The love of admiration, delight, and affection must be felt by us, as the child admires, delights in, and feels strong affection for the father; but this must grow into the love of benevolence for our brother man. Our conduct is to be the expression and manifestation of our love not only toward our Father God, but toward our human brother. As we are all children of the same Father we are own brothers even to the degraded and outcast. And there are infinite possibilities of good in them as there were in the prodigal son in the far country. It is for us to awaken the soul to a sense of such possibilities of good. In Jesus Christ we have the pattern and power of all the Christian virtues. He condemns sin but pities the sinner; gives the wrong-doer encouragement to start in a course of virtue, and affords help as it is needed. We must in every form be perfect in the exercise of benevolence as our Father is; imitators of God as dear children, in the spirit of Jesus Christ our Elder Brother.

The supremacy of compassion is felt and seen more and more in the history and inventions of the present age. To-day there is a wonderfully growing intercourse between civilised men in every part of the world. Think of the quick travelling and quicker communication by telegraph and telephone. Mind is acting on mind, and new and old

ideas are being circulated more than in any previous period of our history. Now what is the influence of this widespread thought, and what its particular advantage if it does not lead men and nations to consider one another, to help one another, and to elevate one another in every possible way? All intercourse, whether by commerce, or by professed friendship, or for the purposes of art and science, or for the promotion of literature, or the advancement of religion, must be founded on the principle of true concern for the interests of one another. No intercourse that is selfish, that is based upon the success of one side only, can last very long. It must fail and ought to fail, since nations and churches as well as individuals are indeed their brother's keeper. There must first be goodwill toward men or there never can be peace on earth. The governments of nations are held in trust for the welfare of the whole human race; and as nations come more clearly to comprehend this great truth, the governments which only regard narrow, selfish, national interests will not be tolerated. Each nation must aim at the good of all nations till the whole world becomes a glorious brotherhood in fact as well as in theory.

The spirit of Christian beneficence operates in a thousand ways, giving us interest in dull, ignorant, commonplace people, as members of the family of mankind, though unlovely in many aspects. The spirit of Christian benevolence is becoming universal like art. It has been said that art has no country. It belongs to every country. This beautiful "poetry in the fingers" is the property of every land. And Jesus Christ is using art to teach us not only

that it has no exclusive country, but that the artist himself has no exclusive nationality—and that art and all else is fast becoming cosmopolitan. He has taught us to study man as man, the child of a Divine Father and the brother of man everywhere: not simply Jew and Greek and Roman, but men as one family dwelling together on the face of the earth. He certainly taught us to study nature, the home of man, in its manifold forms of beauty, colour, use, and duration; taught us also to study history in its relation to man, especially the history of the Christian redemption. But all His teaching was meant to remind us of our duties and responsibilities as members of the human race. It is not for us to isolate ourselves in this age from society and the interests of our fellow-men. "The Word became flesh and *dwelt among us.*" Jesus Christ became human, and lived and worked among humans beings and for human interests. He found His pleasure and interest in the pleasures and interests of mankind. He did not run away from men to serve and enjoy Himself, but belonged to the race and toiled for the race; and to-day He is governing the race and welding it together by His providence, truth, and grace.

The spirit of beneficence is not confined to formal Christian organisations. Outside the churches the secular press is rendering great service to the interests of the people. Newspapers have played a wonderful part in the instruction and elevation of the community—played this part at a time when the people were neglected by the squire and clergyman, and were helpless in their ignorance and viciousness. It may

be said that very few secular newspaper and magazine editors are Christians. Macdonell of the *Times* said: "I know a great many journalists, men of letters, and other educated people in London, but, to speak frankly, I don't know a single one who believes in Christianity." And recently I was assured by one on the staff of a leading London newspaper, that he only knew three Christians engaged on the secular press in the whole of the metropolis. Yet educated men, men at the bar, medical men, and journalists are writing leaders, reviews, reports, which are forming the opinions of the people. But these very men are greatly under the influence of Jesus Christ. They live in a Christian atmosphere, breathe religious sentiments, and are deeply concerned for the social, intellectual, and moral good of society. Many of them are honestly and nobly doing their best to dissipate error, to destroy tyranny, bigotry, and every form of selfishness and greed. Some of them are of the people and for the people in the highest and best sense, and they have struggled for social and moral progress, for the advancement of the welfare of their fellow-men, at the cost of suffering, fines, imprisonment, persecution, and serious losses of all sorts. They have done much to keep alive the essential spirit of religion, and their writing diffuses much of the fragrance of Christianity. The spirit of Jesus Christ is powerfully felt by these literary men. And many authors who do not profess Christian beliefs nevertheless assist Christianity in many of its noblest forms. Even the fiction of the day is not altogether destitute of some measure of good

theology. It is not pretended that the secular press is all that it should be. But many whom we designate un-Christian are in very many particulars at heart Christians in their beliefs and interests. Their minds are steeped in religious sentiments, and so their writing is saturated with Christian influence. They do not lightly speak or write against Christ, but pour out their wrath against all that is false to Christ and the good of the community, often most effectually helping the Church by storming at its insincerity and narrowness and hypocrisy.

Jesus Christ is employing *science* for the spread of Christianity in a thousand ways. The mission of science in this age is a lofty and glorious mission, but it has its limitations, and must keep within its own sphere. Canon Gore says: "Science, with all its goodwill, cannot get deep enough into the heart of the evils it seeks to remedy. Make the outward conditions the best possible—drink and gambling and lust remain. . . . Stones great and heavy are lying upon the graves of men who are dead but who should be alive. Science can take these away, but it is a voice quite different which can give the dead men life, and say: Lazarus, come forth." Science has done much for mankind, and it will do much more for the human race; but there are many moral problems which are for ever insoluble to science. It has no instruments for dealing with spiritual questions. Moral problems lie outside the power of material science. We must go to Jesus Christ with our spiritual weakness and necessities, with the moral woes and wants of the age. But science will help religion, and Christianity

must take every advantage of science. If Jesus Christ does not point in the direction of the solution of the most difficult social and moral problems of the age their solution is impossible.

The influence of Jesus Christ is felt in *humane legislation.* In many ways He has touched intellect, conscience, heart, life, and so He has succeeded in the creation of higher conditions of existence for the people. There are shorter hours of labour in factories, coalpits, workshops, and in all trades, compared with fifty years ago. Children used to go to work at four or five in the morning and toil till eight or nine at night, and if they went to sleep over their work the overlooker used to flog them. In those days men ordinarily worked sixteen hours a day, and there were no bank holidays and no Saturday half-holidays. Sixteen hours a day would now almost drive trades unionists insane. Foods for the people are greatly improved—foods that feed the whole of nature. The laws against the adulteration of food are much more stringent, and more energetically administered than formerly, though the greed and selfishness of men place all kinds of difficulties in the way. The sanitary conditions of life are also greatly improved. There are better homes for the people, and the houses of working men have greater beauty as well as more healthy environments generally. "We owe more to our sanitary engineers and the pioneers of the science of health than we are able to realise. They have delivered us from the dread of plague, made our homes healthy and our cities safe to dwell in, as well as pleasant." Beyond this they have

given every man, woman, and child in the community the prospect of longer life. Our sanitary engineers are preparing better conditions of moral life. But much yet remains to be accomplished before life is properly valued. It is cheap enough in many trades and professions. However, more humane principles are generally coming into operation. Formerly our prisons were filthy in the extreme, full of loathsome disease, but now the sanitation is perfect. Prisoners are cared for when they leave prison. Societies provide them with food and work, and give them another chance in life. A century of executions in Derby show us that life used to be forfeited for various minor offences, but now it is only taken away for murder. From 1732 to 1832 there were fifteen executions for burglary, seven for highway robbery, four for horse-stealing, one for passing counterfeit coin, three for high treason, two for pocket-picking, one for returning from transportation, one for uttering a note, one for shop-breaking, two for rape, one for bestiality, one for forgery, and one for breaking out of jail. To this we must add that hanging in public has ceased, and the hangman no longer gives his object-lesson in brutality and degradation. Jesus Christ has made life more sacred and valuable in the estimation of the community.

The liberties of the people are secured by Christianity. It is said that Jesus Christ discovered the individual, that there was no individuality till He came. There is a sense in which this is perfectly true. He has set the slave free, and given men rights, privileges, education, making the

liberty of the people more rational and secure. But, greatest of all, He has given spiritual freedom to the slaves of sin and Satan. The freedom of Christian service brings the largest liberty to men. When Christ makes us free we are free indeed, free to follow Him in the possession of ourselves. We get freedom to do right by giving up wrong-doing. Not because we have abused certain privileges in the past are we to give up all privileges in the future; not because things are bad in themselves, but because we have made a bad use of them we must give up the evil and seek a sanctified use of things in time to come.

Courage comes of liberty, and liberty by obedience to law. We can only be free born, and not by a great sum obtain our freedom. That is to say, we must be born anew, born of the Spirit and become the children of God spiritually, that we may get the courage to be and to do what Jesus Christ requires of us. It is trust in God as our Father which makes us men of courage. When we depend on God we find our true manhood in His Son and are fearless. We may not have a loud and talkative courage, which is a kind of courage to evaporate in boasting, but possess a quiet fortitude, which keeps us at our post of duty when mere self-asserting pluck has run away from dangers looming in the distance.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Influence of Jesus Christ on the Problems of the People.

Is the influence of Jesus Christ declining, or does it show any symptoms of decay? On the contrary, it is growing in art, literature, music, politics, legislation, sanitation, commerce, and scientific investigation; growing in all life —public, private, social, intellectual, spiritual, economical. It is marvellous how largely Jesus Christ is influencing the world in this age. Many Christians do not see or know this in the England of to-day, do not even think of it—and this is their great shame and loss. They ought not to be so easy in their ignorance, and so content with their insular ideas and insular Christianity. As the religion of Jesus Christ is for the world they ought to look abroad on the life of the nations. The Christian Church ought to be wide-awake, with comprehensive intelligence, with an all-knowing mind, with a revolving eye like a lighthouse, seeing all sides of truth in all systems and organisations, all phases of human life, and all the circumstances of the people. In this age Christians ought to consider the condition of men, the

origin, progress, consummation, or consequences of environment. They should possess more than the simple twilight of knowledge, which enables them just to put one foot before another as they march forward in schemes of general improvement; the whole scene should clearly open up before them as they advance in the elevation of the people. Much of the immorality of the age originates in the circumstances of men rather than in the mind itself. By improving the condition of the people we may remove much evil, and by the strengthening of the intellect we may disarm temptation. We must not aim only at the usefulness of Christianity, but the Christianity of usefulness.

The influence of Jesus Christ is solving the problem of the conversion of the world. In this age great respect is shown by sceptics for Jesus Christ. The day of coarse, vulgar, blaspheming, Bible-abusing infidelity which was formerly witnessed is dead and gone, or very nearly so. The Jews themselves are beginning to throw off the spirit of bitter hatred, and to think and speak more highly of Jesus Christ. Their minds are gradually opening to a truer appreciation of His lofty character and spiritual teaching. The Hindus and Chinese are looking more thoughtfully and kindly into the character and claims of Jesus Christ. He is governing India by His ideas and influence more truly than Buddha. Japan is feeling the force of the same ideas and influences. Throughout Europe worldly men are not abusing the character and doctrines of Jesus Christ as they used to do, but are paying homage to the Christ of history, honouring Him as the purest and most unselfish among men. His

influence is felt in the commerce of nations, the literature of nations, the science of nations, and in all the intercourse of nations. His ideas and sympathies are creating humanitarian feelings all over the world. Christian sentiments are more and more penetrating universal society. Jesus Christ is gradually drawing all men unto Him in thought and effort. They are not Christian yet, but they have lost faith in heathenism, and are slowly but surely coming round to the Cross. The fact is this, the world is open to Christian missionaries. The heathen are asking not only for our missionaries, but for our teachers, our medical men, our mechanics, for our civilisation. Of all the ages this is the most delightful in which to live, because of the great amount of useful work to be done and the wonderful facilities for doing it. Outside the churches there is more Christian light, more good feeling, more kindly deeds, more true religion, and a higher standard of worldly character. Our literary men, artists, scientists, philosophers, and our very novelists are giving us systems of religious duty, and pleading for the general elevation of character. Men around us are commonly asking to be trusted simply because they have given us their word: "My word is my bond." As Carlyle puts it: "Lies are the devil. Hold no communion with lies." Men see they must be truthful, honest, upright, more like Jesus Christ. There is a greater prospect of the conversion of the world to Christianity than ever there was before. Discoveries, inventions, commerce, and a thousand various movements are bringing the nations together as they never were in any previous age; and the influencing of men

outside the churches by the truth and Spirit of God all point to making Jesus Christ universal King in fact as well as in theory.

In *modern missions Jesus Christ is influencing the world as no other teacher ever did or can.* He is making the history of the present age. Men have multiplied gods; Jesus Christ is multiplying virtue and making it a vital force in the communities of men. The wonder of the century is the success of Christian missions. The influence of Jesus Christ is a remarkable force among our students in the colleges and universities, little suspected by the Christian public before the Liverpool Conference of January 1896. These seats of learning are the centre of life and energy going out toward the heathen world. We are told that "in the winter of 1884–85 the visits of Messrs. Stanley Smith and C. T. Studd to a few of the British universities, and the going forth to China of the 'Cambridge Seven,' created a new missionary enthusiasm in the lives of many of the British students." But this was not exclusively confined to Britain. "Simultaneously in America, at a students' conference at Mount Hermon, Massachusetts, a missionary fire was kindled, when one hundred students signed the following declaration: "I am willing and desirous, God permitting, to become a foreign missionary." And this movement soon touched upwards of five hundred American colleges, and enrolled three thousand volunteers. The formation of "The Students' Volunteer Missionary Union" is fast spreading to all the colleges and universities in Christendom. The men who have already gone forth to

evangelise the heathen are strong, brave, manly, scholarly men, and not weaklings who could not pass an examination. These missionaries simply deal with men as they find them, forming the character, shaping the life, and making the future nations of the world. They do not act like the soldier, the merchant, the civilian, but spread Christian civilisation as their primary programme. While men are asking, Do missions pay? let us ask what men mean by missions paying? It is a large and important question. Take all the results fairly into account, and missions pay a thousandfold, opening markets for our goods, countries for our surplus population, in the spread of general and Christian knowledge, but chiefly in the elevation of character and in the creation of a new life after the example of Jesus Christ. On the lips of most men paying is a very materialistic inquiry. The true question is rather, Shall we not make missions more worthy of Jesus Christ? In this age there is a great danger of introducing the commercial spirit into missions. Men want in missions what they seek in business —quick returns. They are unbelieving, impatient for results, and will not allow time for crops to grow and ripen. It is evident, however, that the grain of mustard seed in missionary effort has grown into a magnificent tree, and is sending forth its splendid branches east, west, north and south. Jesus Christ is in this age giving faith and civilisation to the nations, and solving the problem of the salvation of the world.

In dealing with Christian missions, we must not omit medical missionaries, who are doing magnificent work in

China and India, including women duly qualified for medical practice. We must also embrace in our survey engineers and mechanics, who are teaching the highest form and most complete character of Christian civilisation. These agents are doing nothing but good to the heathen, but these are soon followed by our merchants, who often corrupt the people by the brandy bottle. Soldiers, sailors, tradesmen, and artisans blight the fruits of Christianity in many a fair field of missions.

The influence of Jesus Christ is fast helping *to give woman her true position in society.* Women are bound in chains by heathenism; and women are often the greatest opponents of Christianity. But women are being emancipated by the gospel, and becoming the greatest workers for the spread of Christianity. Zenana work is a new movement, and the marvellous creation of the kingdom of God. No one can tell whereunto it will grow, but it seems likely to elevate woman all over the heathen world. Woman's work in so many forms is rapidly making her the friend, adviser, equal, and companion of man, wielding an influence which will tell powerfully on the destiny of the whole human race.

While Christianity is from first to last a religious movement, there is in it a certain secular aspect of the kingdom of God. There is a movement going on in the churches, and a movement going on outside the churches; a movement is going on in Christendom, and another and distinct movement is going on outside Christendom, that is to say, outside Christendom as it is commonly understood. As

there is Britain and greater Britain, so there is Christendom and greater Christendom.

One thing is remarkably clear from the Christian Scriptures, namely, that Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, is and always has been *the light of the world.* He is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world in this age in every nationality. He was the light of all the great and good thinkers and workers of antiquity. All organisers of beneficial enterprise have been led by His light. All good institutions, all moral movements, all good literature, true philosophy and inspiring art are from Jesus Christ. Everything beautiful in thought, pure in desire, and helpful in action; everything good in impulse, motive, and principle; everything beneficial in cause and effect is from Him. His great influence is felt especially in the light He sheds on the questions of the age, and the gracious power which ever accompanies His broad ideas.

There are increasing multitudes of men and women, unknown to the churches, with no record in missionary reports, who are being gradually drawn to Jesus Christ by an unquenchable thirst for living water, like the woman of Samaria. Reason fails them, their moral instincts are not a sufficient guide, and their knowledge of Jesus Christ is imperfect. But the Holy Spirit is at work on their minds and hearts; and, in many lands, they have been partially informed about the Saviour by the passing voice of the missionary, or by someone who has visited a mission station, or by some book; and at home they have been drawn to Jesus Christ by the Scriptures, or by Christian literature in

various forms, or by occasional attendance at the house of God. Dr. Jenkins says very truly: "Outside the people who are called by His name men are reading the Gospels. They cannot read churches, they shrink from attempting to decipher ecclesiastical acts, they dread or despise the nomenclature of creeds, councils, and convocations; but the New Testament is no Church book, it belongs to no party. If Christianity is anything, that which *is* is in the records of this volume; and men are drawing near to this source, as travellers exhausted in the desert, coming from different directions, attracted by signs of water, meet at the desert well."

There are *Church problems* to be considered in this age. Among these we must remember that there is a wonderfully *broadening theology.* We have a higher and truer Christian culture, a more intelligent and scholarly Christianity, coming nearer to the thought and spirit of Jesus Christ, who is better understood than He was in any preceding age; and added to all this is a marvellous circulation of Christian ideas and principles. The age has not outgrown but learned more truly to appreciate the Bible. When we have read a thousand books, we find the Bible the most modern of them all. It is a Book that grows upon us, and theology is the most growing of the sciences. Christian theology is practically boundless, and much yet remains to be discovered by the diligent student. The difficulty is with the theologian rather than with the theology of Scripture. We know so little of the immense stores of knowledge in the Bible, and we so commonly take in just one aspect of a truth, viewing

it out of its relation to other truths, and consequently fail correctly to interpret Christianity, or we make it contradictory. But theologians are learning wisdom from past failures. We have the utmost confidence in the theology of the future—when false methods are corrected—a broadening theology, taking in all aspects of the truth in proper proportion. The old systems of theology have certain grand elements of truth, and the new systems are not new except in form and colour and setting. To say that a thing is new is, generally speaking, only to say that there is a change from one fashion to another. There are fashions in art, literature, and science, as well as in dress. How often people say, I like the new china, or the new school of painters, or the new theologians best, little dreaming how often the new styles are the reproduction of the old, with slight modifications and perhaps improved perspective. Some schools of theology which claim to be broad are the narrowest, most bigoted, unhistorical, and unphilosophical—born of prejudice and want of insight into the truth of the Bible all round. And some who think themselves original, and even some of the Higher Critics, are not at all original. But the days are coming when all sides of truth will be looked at, and theology will be intelligent, consistent, growing, and, in the highest and best sense, broad, but safe and true, honouring God and elevating man — because embracing all the facts.

The reunion of Christendom is another modern problem. This movement is the creation of Jesus Christ. But on the lips of High Anglicans and Roman Catholics the reunion of

Christendom means a mechanical uniformity, which is too commonly and exclusively the aim of sacerdotalists. The unity of Christians of every name in faith and love and work is a very different thing, a more splendid thing, a more spiritual, catholic, and therefore a more Christian thing. We see evidence of true Christian unity in Young Men and Young Women's Christian Associations, Bible Societies, the International Volunteer Missionary Union, and all kindred movements. To-day the churches are shaking hands over the walls of separation. These walls may or may not fall before long, but that is of small importance compared with the real unity of faith, love, and work, which already, in some good measure, exists and is rapidly spreading, apart from organic unity. We see vital unity and glorious variety in all the works of God. The unity of uniformity is cold, hard, mechanical, narrow; the unity of diversity is free, natural, healthy, and vital. Uniformity is not in nature, providence, Christianity, or in secular or sacred history. And as nature is united, yet full of variety in form and colour, leaf and flower, sunrise and sunset, winter and summer, tableland and mountain, so in the Church of Jesus Christ we must look for variety while we aspire toward unity, and never allow in thought or speech unity to mean uniformity, the gathering of all into one visible Church under one human head. Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. He gave Peter the key to unlock the door of the gospel dispensation to the Gentiles. The door has never been closed since. The key is of no further use. No pope can get the key as Peter's successor. No one

church is of exclusive authority. There is equal liberty of conscience, freedom of worship, and spiritual life for all in Jesus Christ. The tendency toward real Christian unity in our day is evident in the Free Churches coming closer together; in deputations sent from one church to another; in Nonconformists entertaining Anglicans, and Anglicans entertaining Nonconformists at the time of their conferences and congresses; in the invitations given by bishops to Nonconformists for simple Christian intercourse and prayer, and in these gatherings talking only about Jesus Christ and the spread of His kingdom. In the International Students' Missionary Conference, in 1896, there were representatives from twenty-four nationalities and forty-two British missionary societies. Nearly all denominations of Christians were represented in that memorable gathering, a remarkable evidence of Christian unity.

The pope has recently put an end to a singular and empty controversy touching Anglican "orders." Lord Halifax, Mr. Gladstone, and some of the leading Ritualists requested a deliverance of the pope on the subject, and then quarrelled with the deliverance, stating that the pope had no authority in this realm of England. Why did they wish the pope's opinion, which is simply the opinion of one who can decide nothing? The pope states that "as the result of the long and exhaustive study which he directed to be made into this question, he now confirms all the decrees of his predecessors in the matter, and, renewing the same by his own authority, proclaims ordination made according to Anglican rite to be absolutely invalid." In the view of the pope the Church of England is a schismatic body, whose priests are really no

priests at all, whose bishops are simply shams, whose ordinations confer no power to administer the sacraments, and whose sacraments therefore are empty ordinances. There is nothing new in all this. It declares the Church of England to be no church at all. How can they look down on Nonconformists? Protestants will rejoice over this. The dream of the reunion of Christendom is broken. Anglicans must remember their Protestant origin, and seek friendly alliances with their Protestant neighbours.

A leading problem of the times is *a revival of sacerdotalism.* This is singular, considering that sacerdotalism was completely removed by Jesus Christ. He terminated in Himself all priesthood except the priesthood of all Christian believers, as He is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." No pope, no Greek priest, no Anglican priest can become His successor or take His place as a sacrificing priest. Nonconformist ministers are declared to be out of the apostolical succession, which apostolical succession is an elaborate argument to prove that branches from the same root do not belong to the same tree. All Christians are from Jesus Christ, but those who have not a certain church label are not His servants and people ; they belong to another family altogether if called by the name of Luther, Wesley, or General Booth. Now Jesus Christ in his day was a Nonconformist, was not in the regular succession, was "not reckoned after the order of Aaron," but "belonged to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar," Heb. vii. 13. He broke the succession, and shows that we live under another and higher order

of things—not the priesthood of man but the continual priesthood of Himself. To speak of the sacrifice of the mass looks like a grave reflection on His priesthood, as if it were imperfect and needed supplementing.

And as to priestly absolution, when Jesus Christ breathed on the disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained," He gave authority to the whole disciples to pardon and absolve men, and not exclusively to the apostles. This is the clear inference from the language of Jesus Christ. If any in the Church can forgive sin all in the Church can do so, for He spoke the words to all the disciples.

Sacerdotalism was not only brought down to the dust by Jesus Christ but by Paul, and in more recent times by Luther. The revival of sacerdotalism is therefore a most marvellous infatuation. Symbolism was the mark of the childhood of religion, and symbolism passed away when religion attained its manhood. If the "orders" of Nonconformists are denied to-day they have this consolation—they are acknowledged of God in the salvation of men, and we need not care about the assumptions and pretensions of others. As Dr. Marcus Dods puts it: "The very fact that Nonconformists acknowledge the other churches of the Church is evidence that they are the true Catholics. Surely the true Catholic is the man who sees a true church wherever Christ's spirit is. He who denies this is the real schismatic . . . . Those who disdain our orders are wrong, by the best scholarship that has been applied to the subject."

Tested by results, Nonconformists have the highest claim to be regarded as true ministers and true churches of Jesus Christ. He said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." The everlasting law to judge by is not orders, but character and conduct and usefulness. Jesus Christ made this clear beyond dispute. "John said unto Him: Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followed not us." As some would say in this age, he was not of our church, did not belong to our ecclesiastical party, was not in the succession, had not been episcopally ordained, was of another denomination, and so we could not really tolerate a man like that, though we could not deny that he did much good work. "But Jesus said: Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me." If sinners are saved, bad men made good, devils cast out, is not that the essential point and all the rest simply contending for the infinitely little?

When men come to think of it, Satan does not cast out Satan. The narrow, bigoted, exclusive spirit, which sees no good in other churches and other systems, is not the creation of Jesus Christ, but is of the Evil One. The kindly, generous, charitable spirit is begotten of Him who said: "He that is not against us is for us." He may differ from us in many minor points, but he has the soul of goodness in him and is working for the true interests of humanity, and so helping the universal spread of Christianity. It is for Christians to see and acknowledge all goodness in everybody and in every organisation as springing from Jesus Christ. Darkness is not from the sun, and goodness is not from the

devil in any form or degree. Goodness and work to make people good can only have one source—and these are evidence of the finger of God in the history of the individual and the particular church to which he belongs. This is a principle of universal application. Nonconformists must not unchurch and deny all Christian goodness and usefulness in Roman Catholics, or Anglicans, or in the Greek Church, or even in the non-Christian religions. Jesus Christ is greater than our little sects and parties, and cannot be exclusively appropriated by any branch of the Christian Church. He is making this clearer every day.

The problem of *Nonconformity* is a great and pressing one. Though branded with supposed inferiority, Nonconformists are not without elements of the grander sort. They need not be ashamed of their history and their principles; they have a glorious past and a bright future; and if there be some severe struggles for them in the near future, they will conquer in coming battles as they have conquered in the past. John Bright says in one of his magnificent speeches: "What has Nonconformity done in England? Look at the churches and chapels it has reared over the country; look at the schools it has built; look at the ministers it has supported; look at the Christian work it has done. And we must not forget that this great Nonconformist body does not include the great wealth of the country. Nearly all the land in the United Kingdom, within some very moderate percentage, is in the hands of Churchmen and Conformists. They have also, or had till lately, nearly all the endowments of a religious character.

They have now in possession some millions a year of ancient tithes. But without any of these the Nonconformists have done their great work in this kingdom." It is truly marvellous what the Free Churches have accomplished under the most disadvantageous conditions. Without State aid or patronage all this work has been done. Indeed it has been done in spite of State persecution and crippling legislation, as in the early centuries of Christianity, when the State was opposed to the Church. Mr. Bright says further: "No Churchman will deny, I don't care how much he may be political, that the Nonconformist population is at least as obedient to the law as any other portion of the people of these kingdoms. If you observe their industry, if you observe their domestic virtues, if you observe their condition as regards morals and religion, I would undertake to say, here and everywhere, that they will at least bear comparison in those qualities with Churchmen of every state and rank." As Nonconformists, we love our country, keep its laws, pay taxes, attend to ordinary business, and do Christian, philanthropic, and patriotic work. We are not altogether free from imperfections, and have only limited capacities, but we find all other Christians in these respects very similar to ourselves. Mr. Bright, who is as fair and good a witness as we can find, may be allowed at some considerable length to state his views: "If I were a Churchman myself, and I suppose it is very much a matter of accident that I am not—if they had not imprisoned an ancestor of mine for many years in Derby Jail, for anything I know I might have been a Churchman

now,—I hope I should at least have had the sense of honour and of justice which would have enabled me to look round and behold all the great works of the Nonconformist body in England, and to regard them with admiration and honour. I would ask any . . . to look round and consider how much of what there is free and good, and great, and constantly growing in what is good in this country, which is owing to Nonconformist action, self-denial, and effort; and, looking at that, if he cannot himself be a Nonconformist, let him not despise the Nonconformists, but let him say it is a great country and a noble race that can enable a portion of its population to do all this in the unfavourable circumstances in which they have been placed." They still see and testify that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and cannot consent to any system which places the civil power between Him and His people. When the crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ are fully understood, every argument for bringing spiritual religion into bondage to the State is paralysed. The Church is a spiritual organisation, to be worked by a purely spiritual force. These views must be proclaimed from the platform, the press, the school, as one great need of the age; and if we suffer for maintaining these views as in the past, we shall once more go through suffering to victory. Romanism and Ritualism cannot hurt Nonconformity—they may hurt themselves.

The danger of æsthetics is among the serious problems of the age. The great love of beautiful and ornate worship, of painted windows, intoned service, and priestly dress, tends to disgust men with the ugliness and coarseness of

some lives, and turns them from notorious and brutal sinners, as the Pharisees were turned from the conversion of publicans and harlots in the days of our Lord. The love of æsthetics is in danger of leading men away from the slums and degraded neighbourhoods to refinement and material beauty; and they who cultivate æsthetics frequently rest in beauty of form and tone and programme, without seeking inward spiritual beauty in thought and motive and principle. There is a strong tendency to rest in splendid architecture, fine music, gorgeous symbolism, all exposing people to the idea of being saved by æsthetics and not by grace through faith. Pure, simple, spiritual worship, without external ornaments and symbols, is the least dangerous to the souls of men, and most in accordance with the practice of Jesus Christ and the Early Christians, who had plain forms of worship and simple rules of religious life. Gorgeous symbolism is more likely to take thought and heart away from God. Many have felt the danger of forms stealing the soul from spiritual worship; it is not simply an imaginary danger.

There are to-day important *national problems* to be seriously pondered by the people. The influence of Jesus Christ is apparently affecting nations for their advantage. Christianity is enlightening, meliorating, elevating whole communities of men, even when people are not personally converted to God. We must think how much Christian civilisation means in this age for society generally. We see the growth of ideas and sympathies in the strong feelings against cruelty to animals, and especially against cruelty to children. Altruistic feelings, the creation of

Christianity, have removed the taxes on knowledge which formerly existed in the shape of paper duty and government stamps on newspapers. Education is promoted and the poor man's child gets his chance of instruction. The public conscience is more enlightened. The saviours of society must encounter error and evil and oppression with no weapon but the words of truth and a willingness to suffer for the right. It is just what Jesus Christ Himself did. In a thousand forms, directly and indirectly, Jesus Christ has been influencing men in every sphere of life and labour—and influencing them as effectually as the sun by his light and heat influences the earth in springtime, causing corn and flowers to spring up and bless and beautify the world. Jesus Christ has made the world to blossom with intellectual and spiritual changes, and these are constantly increasing. It is very clear that the world is not altogether governed by physical force. Public opinion is supreme in Christendom. The moral law is a law between nation and nation, as well as a law between man and man. Some professedly superior people may sneer as they like at this as the weakness of popular sentiment and passing enthusiasm; but there is One who is the God of nations as nations, greater than emperors and statesmen, and with whom in the long-run all emperors and statesmen have always to reckon. What will come out of the wholesale murder of innocent Armenians in cold blood? Christians must not ask for vengeance on the heads of the murderers, but seek some way of humanising the Mussulman, and bringing him under Christian civilisation. This is not so

much the work of European governments as the loving work of the churches. Even if Turkey be left in the sphere of politics, left outside the organisations of all the churches, governments will certainly have to deal with the Ottoman Empire with a firm hand. No state in Europe can be allowed to go on as a government of assassins. Without preaching a crusade against Mohammedanism as such, the humanity of all Europe will insist on the kindly treatment of Greek Christians. It is written for nations and governments as well as for individual men: "Thou shalt not kill." And no nation, no government, no party can stand in these enlightened times which does not keep this everlasting law. The humane spirit of Christendom will be too strong for the guilty, the influence of Jesus Christ will conquer the most obstinate peoples.

Christianity must be applied to the life of nations. The civilisation of the future will depend on Christianity for its noblest aspirations, and is doubtless laden with unimagined possibilities of good for the nations; but these marvellous blessings will only be reached by working out the spirit and principles of Jesus Christ for the whole family of man. It is said that the sword of Garibaldi would have been blind had not the pen of Mazzini given it eyes. By books, conversation, instruction in every form, we must give Christian eyes to the civilisation of nations—and not give it swords and spears. Whatsoever we would that nations should do to us we must do to nations, for this is a law of Christianity. This lofty ideal, like the full moon on a clear night, may look very fine, but a long way off; Christianity will bring it near.

A great and pressing problem in this age is *the settlement of national differences by arbitration instead of by war.* The Anglo-American Arbitration Treaty has arrested the attention of Christendom; and though lost by some three votes, it will probably influence nations in the settlement of their differences. How long will the nations of Europe endure great standing armies? This is a question which ultimately rests with the people. To keep up great armies in times of peace is as costly as a great war every few years. Can national resources be put to no better use? Is there not a more reasonable and humane way of settling our differences than by force of arms—which is acting as if might were right, which it is not? To convince the people of the cruelty and wrong of war is our first and great business; and when this conviction becomes deeply and intelligently rooted in the national mind, nations will find a way of arranging national interests without bloodshed. There is no greater mistake made by our smart superficial thinkers and pretentious writers than the mistake of the common saying that the world is governed by force. No; it is not governed by force but by public opinion, and public opinion is a growing force in Europe. It has been very properly said that "force is an instrument and not a motive, and force cannot move itself." Behind and below force there is motive growing out of the convictions of the people. We have not to declaim and storm, for the day of mere noise and fury is gone; but we have to convince the people of the evil and wrong of war, and national governments will not dare to go against public opinion. It may be difficult to

mediate, and to find an impartial power for mediation, or an impartial court of appeal. But as duelling, which is private war, has ceased in private life by the force of public opinion, we may look for the cessation of war among the nations by public opinion restraining governments.

War always places the heaviest burden on the poor. The rich suffer in officers and generals, but the common soldier is drawn from the working classes. The rich pay income tax, but the poor also pay taxes on food and other articles, and especially in the great number of killed. "War is murder in uniform," but not less murder because it is done in soldier's clothes. It is said: "Love your enemies"—not shoot them. But war is shooting those we never saw before and who never did us any harm. The religion of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, should turn us all into peacemakers—expounding, enforcing, and pleading for peace—living by reason and by grace. War is frequently wholesale murder unprovoked simply to gratify ambition. Napoleon is said to have been a great general at the cost of ten thousand Frenchmen a week. People were not obliged to gratify him by butchering one another. His one instruction to his secretaries was: "Be clear." It ought to have been made clear to him much sooner than it was that wholesale murder could not be allowed for his personal gratification.

There are important *social problems* before us in this age. One of the greatest is *State socialism*. The Divine order of social improvement is this: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Material good will follow spiritual good

in the proper course. The heart changed and the mind renewed, thought and heart begin to work in the right direction, and generally result in some fair degree of material good under the operation of Divine law; only we must remember that God's purpose is not simply to impart material comfort but to produce good character. In the days of the Manchester and Salford Lay Mission, when poor men came to our mission-rooms bankrupt of means and character, after finding salvation they soon got a new suit of black cloth. I do not know why it so often happened to be a suit of black, but suppose black was thought to be most religious, because ministers and their lay helpers wore black. But, however we may account for it, there was the undeniable fact. On Monday mornings, when we reviewed the work of the week, the missionaries often said: "The man who was converted a few weeks ago came to the mission-room yesterday so smartly dressed we did not know him." The missionaries visited the homes of these new converts, and the homes were converted too. The inward spiritual change of these men led to the change of environment. This is Christian socialism in its spring and power, doing what State socialism cannot accomplish. Jesus Christ works from the heart to the life, from within to the outward circumstances; while State socialism works from the outward condition to the inward reformation of the man. One improves the man and so improves his environments, the other attempts to improve circumstances in order to elevate the man. In hundreds of instances I have known the Christian method succeed and the socialistic one fail. As secretary for three years of the Manchester and

Salford Lay Mission, I had a good opportunity of watching the Christian plan of elevating poor men; and as a minister in different counties of England I have watched and tested the same plan, having gone among all kinds of workmen earning good and poor wages. Some of the best paid had the most miserable homes, and some of the worst paid were the most happy in their homes. The difference was made by character. To begin on the man is the best way to raise him; to begin on circumstances leaves him with his old bad tastes and habits. Christianity gives the man staying power which no State socialism can impart.

Jesus Christ was the greatest, truest, purest, most prudent and far-seeing of social reformers. He was not a material socialist, not a State socialist, not a socialist with laws simply on paper, but with laws engraven on the heart. With Him the spiritual always comes before the material. He fed the multitude, but first delivered a long discourse. Jesus Christ understood human nature much better than our modern socialists. Their schemes break down because of unrenewed human nature; and they depend on external force to render their plans operative. They work from without; Jesus Christ works from within. The new heart must lead to the new life. Apart from the kingdom of God there is anarchy. "One of the vilest tyrannies that the world ever saw—The Reign of Terror—claimed to be an incarnation of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Jesus Christ is doing for the age what no other social reformer ever did; He alone is real and effective. His aim was not to make the few but the many rich. He taught that

wealth consists not in property but character. With Him was born a new social kingdom. Christianity begins with religious freedom, then intellectual, afterwards political, and last of all deals with personal material interests. It diffuses intelligence, distributes wealth, brings to the citizen the right of representation in government, and teaches us to leave freedom free. But all these spring from Christ's influence first on the soul. The political economy of the age must learn the method of Christian economics, and teach men not simply how to make money but how to share wealth. Jesus Christ never condemned private property, but communism says private property is a sin. The Christian idea is stewardship—using property for others. The law of ownership established by Jesus Christ is: possessions held in trust for our brother men. Mr. W. E. Gladstone says: "I will tell you what is worse than heavy labour, and that is idle wealth." Jesus Christ is known in history as the son of the carpenter, and His teaching will abolish class distinctions of higher and lower —creating a universal brotherhood.

One of the most important problems of the age is *Christian temperance.* The drink question assumes new forms and dimensions to-day. Limited liability brewing companies give a much greater number of people than formerly a direct financial interest in the sale of intoxicating drinks. An organised movement of this nature secures more parliamentary votes for the party of licensed victuallers. How are temperance reformers going to meet these new conditions and to solve this difficult modern problem?

Christian temperance men will have to face this new combination of forces, and unless this combination can be crippled or broken it will cripple or break the force of temperance reformation. In that case the nation will become the slave of the publicans. There must in some form be local option. The intelligent Christian public must control the drink traffic or it will control them. To begin with, we must have some power of weeding out low public-houses. A Local Veto Bill will not necessarily destroy drunkenness, but it will probably greatly assist Christian temperance. But whatever laws may be made, true and permanent sobriety will have to be secured by individual conviction. And the grand fact is this, to-day no man is compelled to go into a public-house. Our business is to teach men self-respect and self-interest. John Bright used to say the temperance question would make no great progress till the churches took it up. The churches are beginning to take it up. Probably the majority of young ministers are total abstainers from intoxicating drink. This argues well for the sobriety of the next generation. The drinking habits of Christian people generally are completely changed. Formerly wine was brought out in respectable families when the minister paid a pastoral visit. This was the rule and is now the exception. Commercial travellers at the dinner-table used to drink their bottle of wine; now such a thing is seldom seen. At one time men were made drunk for twopence, dead-drunk for threepence, and straw was found for nothing. Wonderful strides have been already made in temperance reformation ; and we may

anticipate a day when on this question Christians will be converted to Christianity.

One of the present-day problems of vital importance to the community is *social purity.* It is abundantly clear that social purity was the original purpose of God, and the redeeming purpose of Jesus Christ. Christianity goes much deeper down in the community than all outward mechanical morality. Impurity commences in thought, and may exist in thought without the external act. "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." In social impurity the man is often the greatest sinner—the tempter is more wicked than the tempted—though both are treated as guilty by Jesus Christ. We have too commonly condemned the woman and not censured the man. Jesus Christ says to the man: "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone;" and to the woman so often first led wrong by man: "Neither do I condemn thee," like society, in severity without mercy, but deal with thee in tenderest pity: "go thy way: from henceforth sin no more." The churches exist to spread social purity throughout the world. There must be the practical application of Christianity to daily life, to free the people from open temptation to impurity. The pursuit of material pleasure commonly leads men to the most fleshly sins. Social purity is essential to family life and necessary to the stability of the nation. The British Parliament requires diligently watching on this subject.

One of the problems of modern life is the *purification of literature.* Sir Godfrey Kneller said he never looked upon

a bad picture but he carried away a dirty tint. We may be sure that no eyes look upon bad books without the tint of evil clinging to the mind. A free press has its dangers as well as its marvellous possibilities of good. It is not very encouraging when we ascertain the kind of books most in request at our public libraries, but matter of grave concern on the part of Sunday-school teachers, parents, and guardians of the young. Excessive novel reading enfeebles the mind, cultivates the emotions at the expense of the reason, and tends to unfit the mind for serious intellectual effort. But the most grave objection is that so many novels are mental and moral shoddy, and not even decent literature. We are thankful to see Christian views coming to the front in our newspapers, but the filthy reports of the divorce courts need sweetening or expunging. Religious meetings are more extensively reported in the provincial and metropolitan press, but immoral books are too lingeringly dwelt on. We must aim at the sanctity of the whole press.

The alienation of working men from the churches is one of the most painful problems of the age—if it be a fact, which I very much question. That is to say, working men in proportion are not more estranged from the churches than the other classes of the community. But of all men working men ought to be the followers of the Son of the Carpenter. If they do not become His disciples it is because they do not know Him, but only some dim, imperfect, distorted image of Him. The churches have not always truly represented Jesus Christ to the people. What we have principally to do to win the artisans to Jesus Christ is to

let them see and know Him as He truly is in the New Testament. John Bright used to say of George Jacob Holyoake: "Holyoake is a very good Christian and does not know it." There was so much kindly, consistent Christian principle in Holyoake, that his case ought to make many Christians heartily ashamed of themselves. So we may certainly say of many working men who do not attend church or chapel. They are nearer to Jesus Christ than they know or think; and if we ever fully win them to Him we must go to them and tell them clearly what He is, and let them understand Jesus Christ for themselves.

The *gambling spirit of the age* must be changed and cured if at all by the influence of Jesus Christ. If Christianity does not correct gross public evils we see no solution of these social problems. This gambling spirit is prevalent on the stock exchange. The great speculations of the times cannot be regarded as legitimate business transactions, but trying to get something for nothing. The very amusements of the age are becoming unwholesome—are in fact turned extensively into gambling. It is so with football, cricket, foot-races, dog-races, horse-races, cycle-races, boat-races, and numerous other amusements and recreations. Betting is not rendering value for value. We are to do fairly by everybody as taught by Jesus Christ, but betting does not recognise this Christian principle—it grasps all it can and never dreams of doing justly. Why should we want what belongs to another without rendering an equivalent? Betting is a deeply exciting transaction, and, like many other evils, grows on what it feeds. To-day there is betting

on almost everything. Young men in offices are betting on whether or not the next person who passes the office window will be a man or woman. Some are of opinion that gambling is worse than drink, bad as that is. Jesus Christ is creating intense disgust among decent people with betting, and anti-gambling societies are being formed and must be thoroughly worked.

The *recreations of the people* are fast becoming grave social problems. They are no longer limited by wholesome exercise. The newspapers are beginning to warn the public against overdone athletics. There may be a craze in athletics just as there may be a craze in anything else. The passion for recreation has developed with startling surprise during the last twenty years. How are the churches to deal with this subject? Some say it is no duty of the Church to provide amusements for its members, which is true enough within certain limits. The mission of the Church is spiritual. There were many things which Jesus Christ refused to do or to touch. He laid down guiding laws, and left the people to find out for themselves the application of such principles. This is often what we have to do in this age. Still we have many poor young people under our care. It is surely wiser and better to keep them as far as possible in good company during the hours of recreation, and not leave them to seek recreation among the wicked. We must neither make Christianity broader nor narrower than the New Testament, but keep all amusements pure and innocent, guarding them against excess as a growing danger in this age. Whatever in recreation lowers the moral

tone is injurious, and must be abandoned at once and for ever.

One difficult problem we have to face in this age is *Sabbath observance.* How deeply impressed strangers who come from France are when they visit England, and see in London itself the suspension of labour on the Lord's Day. This struck Montalembert fifty years ago: "God Himself charges Himself with the police arrangements." A Sabbath-keeping people are a well-ordered community. When attendance at the house of God slackens, Christian work slackens also. Now unless there be stated times for public worship it will seriously decline. It is vital that Christian parents should attend the house of God with their families, and train in this way their offspring to the public worship of Almighty God. There must be organised Christian fellowship. Isolation means decline and death. Mere preaching will not keep up churches. Generally speaking, preachers are not and never have been attractive. Men of genius are not very numerous in or out of the pulpit. People must keep the Sabbath and publicly worship God from a deep and growing conviction of duty. By living Christianity they must spread it. In this way Christianity and Christian institutions must grow in England. But above all, Christian ministers must have clear and definite convictions. The people are what the ministers make them. Looseness of principle, uncertainty in belief, and indifference in religious observances as a rule begin in the pulpit first. When a minister is shaky on any points of doctrine or practice the people soon see and feel it. The spirit of the

preacher is generated in his congregation. His own weakness is reproduced in the church. The decline of enthusiasm, faith, or Christian enterprise dates from this point. "Ah, well," some ministers say, "we must go with the times." Jesus Christ and His apostles did not go with the spirit of the age. They went directly against it and made a new age.

There are great *family problems* in this age; problems of education, training, employment. The family is the unit of the nation; the nation is what the family is. Ruskin rightly says: "If no effort be made to discover, in the course of early training, for what services the youth of a nation are individually qualified; nor any care taken to place those who have unquestionably proved their fitness for certain functions in the offices they could best fulfil—then to call the confused wreck of social order and life brought about by malicious collision and competition an arrangement of Providence, is quite one of the most insolent and wicked ways in which it is possible to take the name of God in vain." A nation must take care of its families, and especially take care of its thoughtful young men; keep an eye on its students, and find gifted minds a fitting sphere, for it will be sure to need them sooner or later, and probably sooner than later.

Some time ago two young ladies told me that their aunt had given each of them a beautiful pair of skates; but they had to wait from the middle of November to the end of January before the opportunity to use the skates came. Their aunt could give them skates, but she could not give them ice to skate on. We can give books and education to

the young, but we cannot give mind to appreciate the one or the other. We can give food and clothing, but not health of body to assimilate the food or wear the clothing. We can give mental and physical training to the young, but we cannot give character. Now Jesus Christ gives character, gives early virtues to children trained in the way they should go. He is influencing the whole family in various ways; sometimes influencing the parents to bring their children to Him, and sometimes influencing the children to bring their parents to Him. Christianity is creating an atmosphere of kindness in our country. When not converted, children breathe this atmosphere of kindly and gracious influence. Professor Herkomer, the distinguished artist, it is said, "has an old father, who lives with him in his splendid home at Bushey. In his early life he used to model in clay. He has taken to it again, but fears that soon his hands will lose their skill, and his work will show the marks of imperfection. This is his one sorrow. At night he goes to his early rest, and when he has gone, Herkomer, the talented son, goes into the studio, takes up the father's feeble attempts, and makes the work as beautiful as art can make it. When the old man comes down in the morning he takes the work and looks at it, and rubs his hands and says: "Ha! I can do as well as ever I did." This is a beautifully human feeling, the creation of Christianity. Many another such instance of kindly feeling is recorded in other forms in the families of our country. Nor does the gracious influence of Jesus Christ reach only to our nation or the nations of Christendom. All kindly

influence springs from Him in heathen lands. The able interpreter of Li Chung Chang, the Chinese envoy, who recently visited Europe, intimates that above all things the Chinese are taught filial piety. He thinks Englishmen do not regard their parents as they ought. And certainly there is great room for improvement. Heathen nations may, in the culture and exhibition of some virtues, rise up and condemn us. But they get the light and grace from Jesus Christ through their sages and philosophers.

Many a rough poacher and wrecker has peeped into a little cradle, and his sleeping baby has made him feel he could no longer go on his cruel and dangerous errand. His child has conquered him. In parliamentary legislation a little child has led statesmen, philosophers, and historians in passing laws against cruelty to children. In both ways the influence of Jesus Christ operates—making parents tender to children, and children affectionate and reverential toward parents. Men and women have been drawn from the error and evil of their ways by deep concern for their offspring; and sons and daughters have been constrained by filial affection to bring their fathers and mothers to Christ. It becomes an important problem of the age how to make and keep family life sweet and pure. Christianity began with the family—Joseph, Mary, and the child Jesus. Here we have fatherhood, motherhood, childhood — the three great factors in life; and Christianity must take care of them in this age.

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